

THE LONDON MERCURY

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EDITORIAL NOTES

WE must thank everybody, both readers and members of the bookselling and publishing trades, whose support led to our last number being a magnificent success. We printed twenty thousand copies ; as we write, it looks as though we shall be sold out. Meanwhile we should be glad if readers would send us more lists of names of friends who might possibly subscribe.

Hiawatha Redivivus

IF anybody had ever told us we should publish any parody of *Hiawatha*, much less an abnormally long one, we should have thought him mad. We have done so. *Solvitur ambulando*.

A Mouse-Trap for Review

WE do not know if it is a result of the *réclame* which has resulted from our reduction in price ; but, for the first time in our career we have been sent a mousetrap for review. An enterprising firm in Birmingham has sent a letter to the Editress of our Woman's Page, running as follows :

Dear Madam,

Knowing that you are always on the *qui vive* for anything that is new and useful to your great family of Women Readers, it occurred to me to send you a MOUSE TRAP that has been especially conceived to remove some of the objections to the ordinary break back trap.

I trust you will accept the same with my compliments.

Accompanying the mouse-trap were particulars of it. At the head of the particulars was a quotation (ascribed to Ralph Waldo Emerson (?))—and

we can't resolve the doubt) which runs "If a man can write a better book, preach a better sermon, or make a better mouse-trap than his neighbour, though he build his house in the woods, the world will make a beaten path to his door." Yes, Emerson, we should think ; unless it is Carlyle in one of his cheerfuller moments.

The Nature of this Mouse-Trap

WE are assured that the handle of this "Better Mouse Trap" ensures greater ease and safety in setting, and avoids risk of hurt fingers. We haven't set it yet, partly because we are terrified of springs, and partly because there is no need of set mouse-traps in our office. It is true that it is three hundred years old and ought to be over-ridden by rodents, but all our mice migrated long ago to the numerous neighbouring churches in search of a fatter living than they would get here. The trap "enables housewife to use the trap without approaching the obnoxious vermin," and it gives "greater facility for placing in mice runs, under furniture and awkward places." And anybody who wants a gross of them can have them for 24/- ; and anybody who cares to order ten gross minimum (1,440 traps) can have them Carriage Paid. We shall remember that, if ever the mice, hearing of our increased prosperity, desert the sinking churches and return to us. Here is a picture of the trap :



The picture of a mouse is presumably a decoy ; the proprietors have doubtless learnt their lesson while duck or pigeon shooting.

O Si Sic Omnes

AS we indicated before, mouse-traps are among the few things that we do not really want. But we thank our friends in the Midlands for instituting a custom which we hope to see adopted by other makers of staple commodities. We guarantee to review in these columns (hitherto chiefly devoted to books), any of the following articles of which specimens may be sent us for review :

Steam Yachts
Rolls-Royces
Mortgages
Other Kinds of Motor Cars
Cases of Champagne
Sweepstake-tickets
Old Masters
Grand Pianos
Guns
Cricket Bats

And, we may add, we should be delighted to pass an opinion on the design and workmanship of any recent bank-notes or sovereigns of which H.M. Treasury or the Royal Mint may be especially proud.

The Price of Books

WHEN we announced that we were reducing our price to a shilling we observed mildly that this was the price of a repainted golf-ball, but that the British public simply refused to think of expenditure on literature as anything but an extravagance. We note in our admirably-edited contemporary *The Publisher and Bookseller* a letter from Messrs. Coates and Bairstow, of Huddersfield, which is bluntly headed "Bellies before Brains":

Sir,—A customer (female) entered our shop and said that she had usually given her niece a five-shilling box of chocolates for a birthday present, but thought she would give a book this year instead. On being shown some five-shilling books she enquired the price, and on being told, replied: "Oh, no, I shouldn't think of giving so much for a book!"

It isn't *only* Philistinism we think: it is partly that the modern public has been spoilt by getting enormous masses of "reading matter" for small sums which do not pay for it: the "text" being really thrown in with the advertisements.

The Type of the Times

WE have received from *The Times* a charming little booklet about its printing. It opens, or almost opens, with the proud statement:

Any comparison made during the memory of the present generation between all the newspapers of these islands would demonstrate the primacy of *The Times* as a piece of printed matter; a primacy more clear if the test included papers from outside Britain.

That is quite undeniable; it was undeniable long before the recent change.

The Change

AS for the change *The Times* itself, the clubs, and all other places of congregation have been full of discussions of it. In *The Times* there have been numerous letters amusingly true to type. The hard-shell conservatives have moaned "What, change our *Times*?"—as though Northcliffe, who was a temporary bad influence on the paper's contents, had not made a permanent improvement in its appearance—and the octogenarian dowagers and admirals have written in shoals saying: "I never thought I should be able to read the *Times* small print again, but now I can." What is the upshot? We can only have our own opinions.

Our Opinion

FOR ourselves we think (1) that *The Times* was so pleasant before that we cannot conceive how anybody connected with it ever thought of a change, unless there was a huge surplus of money for Improvement Research or a printing expert had been let loose on the premises ; (2) that we very much prefer the new heading to the old, and should still prefer it even were the newer not proved to be the older ; (3) that we think the new type the best used in journalism ; (4) that we can read the new small type much more easily than the old ; (5) that we think the new headings heavy in proportion to the text ; (6) that there is a slightly dazzling effect about the new pages the causes of which we have not yet been able to analyze, though every morning we are prompted to make an attempt.

J. C. SQUIRE

NEWS

WE congratulate Sir Godfrey Collins on his elevation to Cabinet rank. So far as we know, he is the first publisher to enter a Cabinet; the authors, and the late Mr. W. H. Smith, got there first.



MESSRS. JOHN MURRAY have completed their cheap edition of the novels of Henry Seton Merriman by including in it, at 3s. 6d. each, his four early books—*Young Mistley*, *Prisoners and Captives*, *The Phantom Future*, *Suspense* and *Dross*, the last two in one volume.



MESSRS. ERNEST BENN are issuing their *Six Penny Poets* in a new binding of attractive coloured paper resembling linen. The titles are on white paper, easily read. The change is made to give greater durability to the books without increasing the price.



RECENTLY, we have received a copy of the *Journal of the Royal Air Force College*, Cranwell, a quarterly which is a decided credit to the producers, both in appearance and content. We came across the following :

CONJUGATION.

(Early Devonian Formation.)

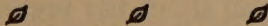
Imperative Mood.

<i>Singular.</i>	<i>Plural.</i>
Yü let oi be.	We'm best be.
Do'ee now be.	Do'ee now be.
Lave 'er baide.	Lave 'um baide.

Subjunctive Mood.

Ef so be as oi be.	Spoas we'm.
Ef so be as yü be.	Spoas yü'm.
Spoas 'er be.	Ef zo be as they'm.

Few people know that these lines were written by R. S. Kindersley, a former Eton master. Sadly enough, at the very moment we were reading them, the author was dying. They were reprinted in an obituary in *The Times* a few days later, credit, as it so often is, being given posthumously.



THE Royal Institution have announced their series of Lectures Before Christmas beginning on November First with the first of four lectures on Rays and Radiations, by E.N. de C. Andrade, Quain Professor of Physics in the University of London, University College. Among others, the series includes three lectures on The Broadcasting of Music, by Dr. Adrian Boult. Tickets may be obtained from the Royal Institution of Great Britain, at 21 Albemarle Street, W.1.



THE Summer number of *The Modern Scott* contains, under the heading *Sir Walter Scott: A Centenary Comment* four articles "dealing with Scott from the standpoint of the modern literary critic and creative artist," by Mr. Donald Carswell, Mr. A. T. Cunninghame, Mr. Edwin Muir, and Miss Rebecca West. The articles are interesting additions to the many expressions of opinion which the Centenary has brought out.

POETRY

Hiawatha at Cambridge

1. *He goes to Cambridge and meets his landlady.*

You shall hear how Hiawatha,
 Hiawatha junior, grandson,
 Great-great (several times) great grandson
 Of the famous Hiawatha,
 Went to study as a student
 At the college of St. Matthew
 At that ancient seat of learning
 University of Cambridge.

In October he arrived there
 At the long and tiring station,
 Gave his luggage to a porter,
 Took a taxi to the lodgings
 Which his college had assigned him.
 Fifteen pounds a term they charged him
 At the lodgings they'd assigned him,
 Fifteen pounds for lodging only
 Plus the lighting on the stairway ;
 Food and cleaning shoes were extra,
 Really most absurdly extra,
 As he found out in December
 When he came to pay the reckoning.

Somewhat nervous Hiawatha
 Took possession of his lodgings,
 Met his landlady who straightway
 Told him all about her present,
 All about her past and future,
 All about her sons and daughters,
 All about her poor late husband
 Mr. Edward Robert Wrestle,
 Who had died of floating kidneys,
 Floating hither, floating thither,
 Like the flotsam and the jetsam
 On the ocean's restless bosom,
 Till the day when Bob was summoned
 (" Bob was what his pals all called him ")
 To the Land of the Hereafter
 Where they found their Mecca, safely
 Anchored to Essential Kidney.

To the chatter of the widow
Of the kidney-ridden Wrestle
Hiawatha stood there listening
With an air of pained politeness.
And he would have still been listening,
For she would have still been talking,
Had he not informed her bluntly
It was time that he was going
To the college of St. Matthew
Where his tutor Mr. Aorist
Was awaiting his arrival.

2. *He interviews his tutor.*

Into Mr. Aorist's presence,
He who was to be his tutor,
Shot the student Hiawatha,
For the floor was highly polished.
With a sudden slide he slithered,
For the floor was highly polished,
Into Mr. Aorist's presence,
Full upon that rotund portion
Of his lithe and lissom body
Which is mostly used for sitting.

Of the student's mode of entry
Mr. Aorist saw the humour,
Mr. Aorist with his forehead
Shining like a dome at Mecca,
In the sunlight sparkling smoothly
Welcoming the weary pilgrim ;
With his little eyes that twinkled
Like the feet of ballet-dancers,
Eyes that twinkled still more brightly
As the youthful Redskin slithered
Widdershins across the parquet.

Then he greeted Hiawatha,
Shook his hand, when he had risen,
For the floor was highly polished,
And with him discussed the details
Of his future course of studies.

He was going to study Classics¹
Under Mr. Aorist's guidance ;
Mr. Aorist was a classic,
Mad about the Classic authors,
Plato, Juvenal and Virgil,

¹ Two dead languages.

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Ovid, Homer, Sappho, Horace,
 And the rest whom I won't mention,
 Though it is extremely easy
 To write anything you're wanting
 In a metre of this nature.

All about the laws and customs
 Of the college of St. Matthew,
 The kindly tutor also told him,
 Warning him of all he should do,
 Making plain all he should not do,
 Saying he was bound to like it,
 Bound to find his feet quite quickly
 If he only would remember,
 Added he with merry twinkle,
 That the floor was highly polished.

Nor was Mr. Aorist faulty
 In his kind prognostication,
 For the student Hiawatha
 Found his feet without much looking,
 Settled down without much trouble
 Into his new mode of living.

3. *He becomes the perfect freshman.*

Soon the student Hiawatha
 Grew to be the perfect freshman,
 Doing all that every freshman
 Does because he is a freshman.

He became a member quickly
 Of societies in legion.
 Irrespective of the weather,
 Round his neck he wore a muffler
 Flashing with St. Matthew's colours,
 Red and green, St. Matthew's colours,
 Not St. Matthew the apostle,
 No one know what were his colours,
 But the colours of the college,
 Colours of St. Matthew's college.

Also he would laugh out loudly
 When he visited the theatre
 So that everyone could hear him.
 And he soiled his cap of honour,
 And he soiled his gown of honour,
 Those two emblems of his college,¹
 Hoping he might be considered

¹ Every student is required to wear a college gown and cap.

As a student of long standing.
 All the other things he did too
 Typical of every freshman.

Choosing with discrimination
 He soon formed a happy circle
 With a group of fellow freshmen,
 All of whom he loved right dearly,
 As he loved his fellow tribesmen
 In the U.S.A. far distant.
 As he loved the youth Llanelly,
 Strongest of his fellow tribesmen,
 Who, when visiting the seaside,
 Always won again his penny,
 Always made the bell start ringing
 When he pressed the proffered pistol.
 As he loved young Aberavon,
 Name which means "Beyond-all-Bunkers,"
 Lithe and supple Aberavon,
 Who at golf could drive eight furlongs
 With a putter made of basswood.
 As he loved proud Corsygedol
 Who—but I'll refrain from telling
 All about his fellow tribesmen.
 (See remark on Mr. Aorist
 And the list of Classic authors).

Every freshman in his essence
 Is another form of tribesman,
 So as he had loved his fellow
 Tribesmen, Hiawatha also
 Loved the group of fellow freshmen
 With whose aid he formed a circle.

All of them he loved right dearly,
 But he had one special favourite,
 One whom over all the others
 He had chosen as his favourite,
 One who was his boon companion.
 And his name was Peter Pilling,
 Scion of the Hampshire Pillings,
 Freshman sprung from Winton College.

Peter Pilling was an athlete,
 Peter Pilling was a scholar,
 Peter Pilling was good-looking,
 Popular with all around him,
 Of the gods the chosen darling,
 Born, according to the doctor,
 With a spoon of shining silver

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Lurking in his gums all toothless.
 And as Jonathan to David
 So was Pete to Hiawatha.

They were happy in their friendship,
 Happy as the heart of laughter,
 Happy as the lambs in springtime,
 Happy as a plunging pauper,
 Who has backed a rank outsider
 In the Derby¹, when his fancy
 Wins the contest in a canter.

4. *He falls in love with an undergraduate.*

With his best friend Peter Pilling,
 (Peter studied Classics also),
 Hiawatha went to lectures.
 They would stride down Petty Cury²
 With their faces flushed and eager,
 (One face each), and arms entwining,
 Eager to imbibe the wisdom
 Handed out by wise professors.

Many were the wise professors
 Handing out great slabs of wisdom
 At whose lectures they attended,
 But the one who was the wisest
 In their humble estimation
 Was the famed Professor Lodestar
 Lecturing on Roman History,
 With his epigrams so dashing,
 With his epigrams so flashing,
 With his epigrams so crashing.

There they sat together drinking,
 Drinking in his tabloid wisdom,
 Drinking in his pungent humour,
 Happy, save the seats they sat on
 Were as hard as ferrous concrete.

Many other students also
 Were attending at the lectures,
 Students from St. John's and Selwyn,
 Sidney Sussex, King's and Downing . . .
 (See remark on Mr. Aorist
 And the list of Classic Authors).

And among them there were maidens
 From the colleges for ladies,

¹ A horse race.

² An old Cambridge byway.

Some from Girton, some from Newnham,
 Out of whom so fair and clever
 There was one who was surpassing
 In the spell of her attraction.

She was very fair and charming,
 Lovelier than Greta Garbo,
 Mystic enigmatic Garbo,
 Hollywood's¹ most famous beauty.
 She was lovely as a sunrise
 Heralding a summer daytime,
 She was lovely as a sunset
 Heralding a summer night-time.

And the magic of her beauty
 Filled the heart of Hiawatha
 With a sudden tender reverence,
 With a sigh of humble longing,
 Till he quite forgot the lecture,
 Quite forgot the brilliant wisdom
 Flashing from the lips of Lodestar,
 Gave instead his full attention,
 All the force of his attention,
 Peeping from between his fingers,
 To the fair enticing figure
 Writing hard within her note-book
 With her golden-nibbed Onoto,²
 Busy as a bee in summer.

II

1. *She is the daughter of the Senior Proctor.*

The charming and seductive maiden
 Whom the student Hiawatha
 Peeped at from between his fingers
 At Professor Lodestar's lectures,
 Was none other than the daughter
 Of the mighty senior Proctor³
 Oliver de Courcy Wormwood,
 Who like thunder in the offing
 Used to roam about the highways
 Of the ancient town of Cambridge
 Every evening after sunset.

¹ A district in the U.S.A. devoted to the manufacture of motion-pictures.

² A pen which retains ink for a period, as a camel retains water.

³ An University official (very rich) whose functions are described below.

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He was wont to scour the highways
 Every evening after sunset
 With two faithful hounds attending,
 Human hounds they were, not canine,
 Known familiarly as "bulldogs."¹

They were little short of devils,
 Devils with the speed of devils,
 Devils with the strength of devils,
 Devils with top hats upon them,
 Who would chase and capture students
 Whom their master's eye detected
 Revelling in misdemeanour,
 Fracturing some ancient statute
 Of the ancient seat of learning,
 Or within the streets behaving
 In a manner ill befitting
 One in statu pupillari.²

These two hounds like Tragic Furies
 Would pursue the miscreant student,
 (See the doubtful sport of beagling),
 Catch him, when they weren't outwitted,
 Bring him trembling, panting, whining,
 Whimpering and sick with terror,
 Fling him at the feet of Wormwood,
 Oliver de Courcy Wormwood
 Strong and wealthy Senior Proctor,
 Symbol he of law and order.

And the fair and lovely maiden
 Whom the eye of Hiawatha
 Fondled gently from a distance,
 Fondled from between his fingers
 At Professor Lodestar's lectures,
 Was the daughter of this symbol.

Ermyntrude de Courcy Wormwood
 Was the name most people called her,
 Daughter of the Senior Proctor ;
 But not so my Hiawatha,
 In another wise he named her,
 For he called her Running Water,
 Gugglegaga, Running Water.

Was not her voice just like the water
 Running from his morning bathtub,
 Running from his shining bathtub,

¹ For some reason best known to someone, this is the name given to the Proctor's satellites.

² A Latin expression which means undergraduate or something similar.

Which he loved so very dearly ?
 So he called her Running Water,
 Very tenderly thought of her
 Every morning in his bathtub.

But alas he did not know her,
 He had never met her ; only
 From a distance could he love her,
 Worship her with secret passion.
 He had never had the courage
 To approach and say " Good morning
 Have not we two met at Brighton ?
 May I help you with your homework ? "

So he had to wait in patience,
 Love her from a distance only
 Peeping from between his fingers
 At Professor Lodestar's lectures,
 Hoping, praying, praying, hoping
 That the Fates might someday give him
 An introduction to the maiden.

What a lovely thing is passion
 Lurking in a youthful bosom !
 Passion that is pure and tender
 Passion that is—but I'll leave it,
 I'll refrain from an enlargement
 On this highly private subject,
 For if you would read about it,
 You should buy the verse of Wilcox¹,
 Or, if you prefer it watered,
 You should buy *The Daily Graphic*²,
 Where a damsel Wilhelmina
 Stitch her other curious name is,
 Often deals with the subject
 In her daily ' fragrant ' minute.

Now instead I must inform you
 How the lovelorn Hiawatha
 Met thé maiden Gugglegaga,
 Met the lovely Running Water.

2. *He is fined by the Senior Proctor.*

On a certain Monday evening
 After he had had his dinner
 In the College, Hiawatha

¹ An Anglican poetess second only to Sappho.

² A paper.

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Took a stroll along the highways
Of the ancient town of Cambridge.

And his thoughts were so entangled
With the vision of the maiden
Ermyntrude de Courcy Wormwood,
That it quite escaped his notice
That he had not got upon him
Those two emblems of his college
Cap and gown, which every student
Must by ancient law and statute
Wear upon his ambient person
When he wanders in the highways
Of the ancient town of Cambridge,
After that the sun all-flaming
Has been shrouded by the twilight
In the occidental quarter
Of the over-reaching heavens.

And if ever any student
Failing to obey this statute
Is observed in misdemeanour
By a proctor, he is mulcted
Of the sum of six and eightpence.
Six bright shining silver shillings,
Eight brown burnished gleaming coppers,
Which he has to pay as forfeit
For his disobedient conduct.

And upon this Monday evening
Hiawatha was detected
Minus the required garments
By the hawk-eyed Senior Proctor
Oliver de Courcy Wormwood,
Who informed him he had fractured
Cambridge's most ancient statute,
And must on the morrow therefore
Come to him to pay the forfeit
That his conduct had demanded.

Normally the proctor's bulldog
Gathered in the six and eightpence,
But the greedy mind of Wormwood
Thought that maybe Hiawatha
Was a student who had money,
Who might possibly be mulcted
Of some more than six and eightpence.
Thus we see the hand of fortune
Working through the sin of one man
To the profit of another.

Consequently on the morrow
Went the miscreant Hiawatha
To the Senior Proctor's mansion.

3. *When he goes to pay the fine, he meets the maiden.*

Waiting in the Wormwood drawing-room,
Waiting for the Senior Proctor,
Stood the student Hiawatha
Trembling with suppressed excitement.
He was wondering if he'd see there,
Wondering if the Fates would let him
Meet the goal of his desires
Ermyntre de Courcy Wormwood,
Gugglegaga, Running Water.

And as he stood there expectant,
Thinking of her form and figure,
Thinking of her face of beauty,
Thinking of her hair all golden,
Thinking of her eyes all shining,
Thinking of her smile of sunshine,
Suddenly the door was opened,
And before his goggling vision
She herself appeared in person,
She herself with form and figure,
She herself with face of beauty,
She herself with hair all golden,
She herself with eyes all shining,
She herself with smile of sunshine,
Ermyntre de Courcy Wormwood,
Gugglegaga, Running Water,
Mecca of his heart's desires,
Daughter of the Senior Proctor.

Like the drill the British workman
Uses when he's road-destroying,
Pulsing, throbbing, shaking, pounding,
So the heart of Hiawatha
Hard against his body pounded.

Like the heads of two young bullocks
Meeting in a sportive contest,
So the knees of Hiawatha
Shook together very fiercely,
For he was supremely nervous.

But when he beheld her smiling,
Not disdaining him, but smiling,
Glancing at him very kindly

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With a look of friendly interest,
 Almost more than friendly interest,
 Like the look the gold-prospecter
 Gives, when he beholds the metal
 Gleaming in his pan of water,
 Then the heart of Hiawatha
 Took again its wonted courage,
 Felt that it was now or never,
 Felt the Gods to him had given
 This most unexpected opening
 To declare the love within him,
 Felt that he would be an idiot
 Of exceptional proportions
 If he let the chance slip by him.

4. *He declares his love : The Maiden replies that he must get a ' blue ' for Rugby Football before he can win her.*

So the ardent Hiawatha
 Made confession of his secret,
 Told her of the love within him.
 " Ermyntrude de Courcy Wormwood,
 Gugglegaga, Running Water,
 Climax of a life of longing,
 Apex of my heart's desires,
 Mecca of my Redskin passion !
 Since the moment I first saw you
 Taking notes at Lodestar's lectures
 With your golden-nibbed Onoto,
 Busy as a bee in summer,
 I have loved you and adored you
 With each atom of my body,
 With each fibre of my being."

In cascades the words came tumbling
 Dashing, rushing, leaping, plunging,
 From his mouth, like sheets of water
 Pouring from an opened lock-gate.
 He let fly with both his barrels.

" I love everything about you,
 There is nothing that displeases,
 I want you for ever near me,
 I need you to make me happy,
 You could make me very happy,
 Where you are I think the sun is,
 Life apart from you no life is,
 Just a colourless existence.

" Will you please be mine, my darling ?
 Will you be my Gugglegaga ?
 Will you be my Running Water ?
 Will you let me be your young man ?
 Will you let me be your fellow ?
 Will you let me be your hero,
 Friend, adviser, chap, and husband ?

" Dearest of the dear I love you !
 Sweetest of the sweet I need you !
 Say that in return you love me,
 Tell me that my passion for you
 Is not altogether hopeless.

" See ! Upon my knees I ask you,
 Quite regardless of the creases
 In my made-to-measure trousers,
 Beg you not to treat me coldly,
 Beg you not to send me packing,
 Beg of you to say you love me,
 Whisper that someday you'll let me
 Take you back to share my wigwam
 In the U.S.A. far distant."

Then a moment Hiawatha
 Paused, for he was now quite breathless,
 Bending on his knees before her.

With a look of girlish pleasure,
 Ermytrude de Courcy Wormwood
 Gazed upon the burning features
 Of the kneeling Hiawatha,
 Smiled into his eyes, and whispered,

" I am glad, oh Hiawatha,
 You have boldly broached the subject,
 Glad that you have told me frankly
 Of the prompting of your ego,
 Of the urge within you surging,
 Of the surge within you urging,
 Of the love within your bosom.

" For I too have often seen you,
 Noticed you at Lodestar's lectures
 Peeping from between your fingers,
 Felt that I would like to meet you,
 Secretly had hopes that some day
 You and I might know each other,
 And eventually might even
 Grow to be each other's sweethearts."
 As she spoke a shade of crimson
 Crept across her creamy features,

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And her head she coyly hung down,
Like a rabbit at the butcher's.

Then my Hiawatha rose up,
Up from his debased position,
And with his two arms outstretching,
Was about to clasp the maiden
In a strong embrace but tender.

But she stayed him with a gesture,
As a constable stays traffic,
Said, " Not yet, oh Hiawatha !
You must not be overhasty,
For before my love you can win
You must do some deeds of daring,
You must win a blue¹ for Rugby,²
You must be my special hero
In the Rugby Football fifteen,
You must help to beat up Oxford.
Not till then must you address me
Not till then must you return here.

" But when that great game is over
And you have displayed your prowess,
And you have your blue for Rugby,
Then you may return and woo me,
But before you may not woo me."
Womanly she paused, then added,
" Au Revoir, my Hiawatha ! "

And like water from a bathtub
Slipping, when the plug is lifted,
From the room slipped Gugglegaga,
Lovely lambent Running Water,
Leaving Hiawatha gaping,
Breathless with suppressed excitement,
So that he scarce heard the proctor
Oliver de Courcy Wormwood
When the latter came and told him
That his daughter had besought him,
With a smiling face besought him,
To excuse the Redskin student,

¹ The colour of the sporting garments worn by representatives of the two Universities of Oxford and Cambridge in their various sporting contests. Cambridge is light blue, Oxford dark blue. It is somewhat obscure why the colour blue should have been chosen. Probably it is because most sports are played in the open air, and the sky is often blue : or maybe it is because participation in sport sometimes makes you black and blue, and as there are not two shades of black (the lighter shade being grey), two shades of blue were chosen : or maybe there is some other reason.

² A game of football played mostly with the hands.

The dark handsome Redskin student,
From the fine imposed upon him.

Scarcely his reprieve he heard then.
But as in a trance or coma
From the room he made his exit,
From the house he made his exit,
Heedless of the world around him,
Thinking only of the whispers
Of the lovely Gugglegaga ;
Seeing nothing but the features
Of the lovely Gugglegaga.

Slowly home his way he wended,
Light as air walked to his lodgings,
Heedless of the sights around him,
Heedless of the sounds around him,
Till an angry lorry driver
Asked him, as he jammed the brakes on,
Where he thought that he was going.

III

1. *He wins his Blue for Rugby Football.*

From that moment Hiawatha
With unwavering endeavour
Strove to gain his blue for Rugby,
So that he could win the maiden.

All the day he spent in training,
Running up and down the touch line,
For he was a wing three-quarter,¹
Practising the swerve² and side-step,²
Practising the punt² and drop-kick²,
Practising the deadly hand-off.²

And at night within his lodgings
He would read up all the volumes
Dealing with the noble pastime
Rugby Football, which was started
By a certain lad called Ellis,
Walter Webb his other names were,
Sometime in the eighteen-twenties,
Who, when at a school called Rugby
Playing football with his colleagues
Once, without a moment's warning

¹ His position in the team.

² Various Rugby manoeuvres.

THE LONDON MERCURY

Lifted up the ball of leather,
 With his feet no longer kicked it,
 But instead most firmly grasped it,
 In his two hands tightly held it,
 Picked it up and started running,
 Much to the outraged amazement
 (Doubtless) of his pedal colleagues.

And the skill of Hiawatha
 At this game of Rugby Football
 Grew with such amazing swiftness,
 That it seemed that he was certain
 To obtain the blue he sought for.

But within the ointment lurking
 There was fly of large proportions
 In that Hiawatha's best friend
 Old Wintonian, Peter Pilling,
 Was the present wing-three-quarter,
 Almost bound to play for Cambridge
 In the annual game *v.* Oxford,
 Till the claims of Hiawatha
 Forced themselves to be considered.

But when Hiawatha told him
 Why he strove to gain the honour,
 Sadly smiled Peter Pilling,
 Shook his head with rueful motion,
 Said "Then I will leave you to it.
 You shall gain the glory, not I.
 I will not remain a rival.
 I will not attempt to thwart you.
 I'll renounce my blue for Rugby.
 You shall gain your blue for Rugby.
 You shall gain your Gugglegaga.
 Best of luck, oh Hiawatha!"

Peter Pilling thus retired,
 Gave up playing Rugby Football,
 Won instead a blue for Soccer¹;
 White² man he and pukka sahib³,
 'Varsity and public-schoolman.

¹ Another game.

² Not yellow.

³ A man who always plays with a straight bat and is never off-side. A man who never cheats at cards, but as often as he gets the chance in business. It is an expression commonly employed by advertisers in the personal columns of British journals as a modest description of themselves. The females of the species are known as mem sahibs.

2. *The Day of the 'Varsity match comes round.*

Then the day which Hiawatha
Had so keenly been awaiting
Came at last ; that great occasion
When he would display his prowess
In the Oxford-Cambridge contest,
In the Rugby Football contest ;
When he would impress the maiden,
Gugglegaga, Running Water,
So that he could go and woo her,
So that he could go and win her.

Round the ground the crowds were seething,
Seeking their allotted places,
(" Where the dickens is the North Stand ? "
" Where the dickens is the East Stand ? "
" Where the dickens is the West Stand ? ")
Students past, and students present,
Critics of the game all hoary,
With their wives and with their sweethearts,
Young men showing off their sweethearts,
Pushed and jostled one another,
In their eagerness to witness
This great battle, fierce and bloody.

After which a great percentage
Were most certainly intending
To make whoopee¹ in the evening,
After dinner in the West End.²

There upon her cushion planted
In the North Stand far uprising,
Sat the lovely Running Water.
Eagerly she read her programme,
Eagerly she read the printing
Where it said " M. Hiawatha.
(Sioux High School and St. Matthew's)."

And her heart beat slightly faster.
And her breath came slightly quicker,
And her eyes shone slightly brighter,
So that all the men around her
Looked at her with glad amazement,
At the magic of her beauty,
As she thought of Hiawatha
(Sioux High School and St. Matthew's)
With the cleanness of his profile,

¹ A Redskin expression meaning " to have fun."

² A London district.

THE LONDON MERCURY

With the straightness of his carriage,
 With his eyes so full of ardour,
 With his teeth so full of stopping,
 (Lately he had had some trouble
 With a quorum of his dentals) ;
 Slim and supple Hiawatha,
 Who was going to show his prowess,
 Who was going to play his hardest,
 All because it was her pleasure,
 All to bring her joy and honour.

Meantime in the great pavilion
 Sat the student Hiawatha,
 Trembling like a Chiver's jelly ;
 He was feeling very nervous,
 He'd a bad attack of wind-up,
 For the man whom he was marking,
 His opponent in the contest,
 Was a man both strong and cunning,
 Was a man both swift and hefty,
 (From South Africa he'd travelled
 To do battle in the contest) ;
 And the thought of this great giant
 Caused much fear to Hiawatha.

But he set his teeth right firmly,
 Both the stopped ones and unstopped ones
 And with bated breath he murmured,
 " Pull your socks up, Hiawatha ! "

And he thought of Running Water,
 Till his shaking limbs grew steady,
 And the feeling in his stomach,
 As of sick men on the Channel,
 Grew a little less distinctive.

Then upon his knees he bent him,
 Lifted up his hands to heaven,
 Shouted with his voice so mighty,
 " Oh Minuto ! Lord and Father !
 Grant to me this day such courage,
 Grant to me this day such swiftness,
 That I may outwit that devil,
 That great rampant Oxford devil,
 That great devil strong and cunning,
 That great devil swift and hefty
 Playing at right wing-threequarter.
 Grant that I may catch him bending
 When the referee's not looking.

“ And, oh Father, grant I pray you
 I may be a combination
 Of such men¹ as Thomas Devitt,
 C. N. Lowe and C. D. Aarvold,
 Ian Smith and Windsor Lewis,
 Stephenson, G. V. and Smeddle,
 A. L. Novis, C. A. Kershaw,
 Davies and . . .” He got no further,
 For his angry captain asked him
 What the dickens he was doing,
 Told him to refrain from babbling,
 Told him it was time to issue
 Into the great green arena,
 There to join in bloody combat.

So with one more cry to heaven,
 One more fiddle with his bootlace,
 One more touch upon his trousers,
 —Were not many ladies present?—
 One more glance within the mirror
 Just to see his hair was parted,
 —Was not Running Water present?—
 Hiawatha joined his team-mates,
 Trotted into the arena,
 Shining in his spotless jersey,
 Shining in his spotless trousers,
 Glowing bright against the darkness
 Of his handsome redskin sunburn.

(Stupid women in the East Stand
 Asked if it was Duleepsinjhi).

3. *Cambridge win, Hiawatha scoring the winning try.*

Whistle shrilled, the game was started.
 Thirty picked and valiant athletes
 Struggled fiercely 'gainst each other,
 With the lust for blood upon them,
 Lust for conquest, lust for glory.
 Doing battle for the honour
 Of their separate *Almae Matres*.²

Ball was passed and man was tackled,
 Round him quickly formed a scrummage;
 Ball was heeled, but the scrum-half
 Was soon smothered by wing-forwards,
 Dirty players they, all off-side.

¹ British footballers.

² A Latin expression for 'Universities.'

THE LONDON MERCURY

First the one side then the other
 Seemed to be in the ascendant,
 And the ding-dong struggle wavered
 Up and down the green arena.
 Till with five more minutes wanting,
 E're the final whistle sounded,
 Neither side had started scoring,
 Though they both had tried their utmost,
 Two fifteens of valiant heroes,
 Thirty stalwart youths all striving,
 Thirty stalwart youths all panting,
 Eager to emerge victorious
 From the bowels of the moment.

Bright among his sweating comrades
 Shone the youthful Hiawatha
 Stationed at left wing-three-quarter.
 He was eager as his team-mates
 That they should turn out the victors,
 But more eager was to do some
 Deed that was both bold and skilful,
 That would make him gain the favour
 Of the lovely Running Water,
 Planted firmly on her cushion
 In the distance of the North Stand,
 Way up on the road to heaven.

There he stood expectant, hopeful,
 Taut, impatient as a greyhound
 Waiting for the hare (electric),
 When, with one more minute wanting
 E're the game should reach its ending,
 Suddenly the ball of leather
 Was despatched in his direction,
 Tightly blown and very oval,
 I mean the ball, not Hiawatha,
 (He was blown, but never oval),
 Which receiving in his stomach
 Over it his hand he fastened,
 Clutched it to him very tightly,
 Set his teeth and strained his muscles,
 Shouted out, " St. George for ever !
 Watch my step, oh Running Water ! "

Then, as swift as any arrow
 Cleaving through essential ether,
 He went flat-out down the touch-line.
 With the speed of angry seagull
 Riding on the wind's strong pinions,

Through a crowd of would-be tacklers
 Streaked his strong and supple body,
 Through a crowd of grim opponents,
 All obsessed with the intention
 Of destroying him completely.

But he kept them at a distance,
 Sent them flying in confusion
 With his side-step and his hand-off,
 So that one and all went grovelling
 On the ground in fury rolling,
 Swearing like a troop of troopers,
 “— ∪ — ∪ — ∪ — ∪ !”

So the youthful Hiawatha
 Darted to and fro among them,
 Darted backwards, darted sideways,
 Darted forwards, selling dummies¹
 With a most superb abandon,
 Till at last he had eluded
 Every single grim Oxonian,
 Till he'd left them far behind him
 On the ground in fury rolling.
 (“— ∪ — ∪ — ∪ — ∪ .”)

And amidst the roaring tumult
 Of the Cambridge team's supporters,
 Wild with joy and hoarse with cheering,
 There the oval ball he grounded
 In between the shining goal-posts,
 Where they stood like faithful sentries,
 Tall and straight as age-old fir trees.

IV

1. *He goes to claim the maiden.*

Now that he had shown his prowess
 In the Rugby Football contest
 As the maiden had demanded,
 Hiawatha went to find her,
 Ermyntrode de Courcy Wormwood,
 Hiawatha went to win her,
 Eager to obtain the guerdon
 That his valiant play had earned him,
 Eager to embrace her tightly,
 Gugglegaga, Running Water.

¹ A Rugby manoeuvre.

2. *But in the meantime her father has told her he has other prospects for her.*

But alas a tragic happening
Suddenly had come between them,
Very suddenly between them,
Like a cloud which veils the glory
Of the sunshine in the summer,
Come between my Hiawatha
And the lovely Gugglegaga,
So that their romance was blighted,
Nipped like roses in the budding.

For the father of the maiden,
Oliver de Courcy Wormwood,
Had with emphasis informed her
As they left the green arena,
When the game had reached its ending,
That he was not going to let her
Take up with young Hiawatha,
That he'd other prospects for her,
That he'd fixed that she should marry
Mr. Alabaster Rhomboid,
Don¹ of Higher Mathematics,
(Man who only spoke in numbers,
Man who only laughed in circles,
Man who only smiled in angles,
Man who only thought in figures),
And that she was going to marry
Mr. Rhomboid and no other,
And that she should drop instanter²
ὡς τάχιστα² Hiawatha ;
Otherwise he'd see her further.

Fiercely then did Running Water
Argue with her iron parent,
Begged him not to be so heartless,
Tried to rust him with her weeping.
Filled with bitter tears her eyes were,
As she begged him not to make her
Give the bird³ to Hiawatha.

But her father would not soften,
He, the mighty Senior Proctor,

¹ Professor.

² Classical expressions for 'at once.'

³ An old Redskin expression. When one of two lovers jilts the other, he or she is said to give her or him the bird. It means that the jilted party may now consider himself or herself to have been provided as it were with a pair of wings with which to fly away from her or him as soon as possible.

Oliver de Courcy Wormwood,
 Symbol he of law and order.
 With his iron voice he told her
 That what he had said he had said,
 And that he would never waver,
 Never change from his decision,
 Though enforcing his decision,
 Added he with some emotion,
 Trotting out that ancient falsehood,
 Hurt him far more than it hurt her.

So with scalding tears of anguish
 In her eyes, poor Running Water
 (Very much poor Running Water)
 Broke the news to Hiawatha
 When he came to win and woo her.

"Is there no hope, Running Water?"
 Asked the punctured¹ Redskin student,
 With his dream world tumbling round him.

"None whatever, Hiawatha!"
 Sadly sobbed the Proctor's daughter,
 Flat as any well-made pancake.

Then the punctured Redskin student
 Interviewed the iron parent,
 Begged him not to be so cruel,
 Begged him to be kind, and alter
 His regrettable decision.

But the iron parent changed not,
 Never wilted, never wavered,
 Told the hapless Hiawatha
 That what he had said he had said,
 That there was not any prospect
 Of his changing his decision,
 His regrettable (sic) decision.

3. *Hiawatha and the Maiden reluctantly part.*

So the hapless Hiawatha
 And the disappointed maiden
 Were compelled to part for ever;
 Sighing, miserably they whispered
 Sad good-byes to one another.

They were just another couple,
 Just another youthful couple
 Parted by the hand of Fortune,

¹ A metaphor from cycling.

THE LONDON MERCURY

Chastened by their first encounter
 With the bitterness of living ;
 Learning that our dreams and fancies
 All too frequently are murdered
 By the facts that overwhelm us ;
 Learning that the game of living
 Is not always hotsy-totsy¹,
 Not a bed of roses always.

4. *Hiawatha is summoned home.*

Slowly, sadly, Hiawatha
 Crept again home to his lodgings,
 Whispering that Fate was scurvy,
 Very heartless, very cruel.
 It had taken all the savour
 From his life, had left him lonely ;
 Taken from him all the meaning,
 All the purpose of existence,
 Left him without aim or object,
 Like a verb without a subject.

But the Gods were not too heartless ;
 They provided compensation
 For the hapless Hiawatha,
 Cheated of the girl he worshipped,
 Gave him something to distract him,
 Something he could set his mind on,
 Which would help him lose his troubles.

At his lodgings Clara Wrestle.
 (Widow of the late lamented
 Kidney-ridden Robert Wrestle)
 Told him that there was a cable
 All the way from Sioux City,
 Waiting for him on the table.

Opening it, my Hiawatha
 Found that it was from his father,
 Telling him to travel homewards
 Rapidly, without delaying ;
 For an offer had been made him
 Of a contract (many dollars)
 With the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer
 Film Producing Corporation,
 To appear in " Indian Passion,"
 " Redskin Love " and other talkies.

¹ An old Redskin expression meaning very enjoyable.

For a period Hiawatha
Doubting, thought the matter over,
Wondered whether he should go from
All the pleasant times of Cambridge,
Felt reluctant to forego them,
To renounce the friends he'd made there.

But when thoughts of Running Water,
Who had slipped from him for ever,
Rose incessantly before him,
Well he knew he had no option,
Knew he could not bear existence
Near his unrequited passion,
Near the girl he loved so fondly
But could never hope to marry.

So he cabled back his answer
"O.K.¹ Chief. Reserve the offer."

5. *Hiawatha leaves Cambridge.*

So the student Hiawatha,
Left the ancient town of Cambridge,
Left that ancient seat of learning,
Left the college of St. Matthew.
Left his Classics, left his Rugby,
Left the pleasant times he'd had there,
Left the friends whom he had cherished,
Left the lovely Running Water,
Save when in his dreams he saw her,
To wax rich upon the talkies.

As he steamed out of the station,
Of the long and tiring station,
He leaned from his carriage window,
Waved to all his friends assembled.
And they cheered him to the echo
As the train steamed from the station,
Wished him fortune on his journey,
"Cheerio! Oh Hiawatha!"
One and all they called out to him,
"Best of luck to you, old fellow!"
After him they cried together,
"Make your name upon the talkies!"
Shouted they as he departed,
"Give my love to Greta Garbo!"

¹ Another old Redskin expression meaning 'quite all right.'

THE LONDON MERCURY

Fainter, fainter, ever fainter
 Came their voices from the distance,
 "Cheerio ! Oh Hiawatha !
 Give my love to Greta Garbo !"
 From the fast receding station,
 "Cheerio ! Oh Hiawatha !
 Give my love to Greta Garbo !"
 Till at last he scarcely heard them,
 "Cheerio ! Oh Hiawatha !
 Give my love to Greta Garbo !"
 Save within his two ears ringing,
 As he sank down in the corner
 Of his first-class railway carriage,
 "Cheerio ! Oh Hiawatha !
 Give my love to Greta Garbo !"

* * * * *

Thus departed Hiawatha
 From that ancient seat of learning
 University of Cambridge,
 After his too fleeting sojourn
 At the college of St. Matthew.

Thus departed Hiawatha
 In the corner of his carriage,
 In the express train for London,
 To the Land of Prohibition,
 Of the speakeasies and gangsters,
 To the land of Ford and Lindbergh,
 To the coast of California,
 To the country of the talkies.
 Cheerio ! Oh Hiawatha !

C. B. M. HEYWOOD

FIRST OPERATION

By NINA CONDRON

THE young nurse walked down the corridor. Her starched dress crackled as she went. She swung her hips a little, consciously ; trying to move jauntily like the staff nurse she admired. One hand was laid lightly in the pocket of her skirt pushing her apron out like a sail. With the other hand she flipped at each radiator she passed. If her parents or sisters could see her now how impressed they would be ! She swaggered more definitely as though she were really " showing off " to them, but the corridor was empty and quiet and the door marked " Theatre " was before her. She turned the cold handle and her body stiffened. Her unreal jauntiness fell from her ; she drew in her lower lip like a child who is going to cry.

The theatre was empty. It was very white and shiny. Two of its walls were all window and the spring sunshine flowed unhindered upon the dazzling glass cases and the steel instruments. There was a long enamel trolley between the windows made up like a bed with a pad of folded blankets, a sheet and one pillow.

The young nurse stood very still with her lip sucked in. Her face was pale and her forehead moist with sudden sweat. A wisp of damp hair clung to her plump cheek. Her clean stiff cap stuck up at the sides in two ears making her look a little like a rabbit.

Now there was no escape. It was easy to laugh in the common room when somebody said, " Wait till you see a hysterectomy or an amputation." It was so easy not to be afraid in the common room. They said Theatre Sister chased you so much there was no time to be scared, and the staff nurse said you would be all right if you did not look at " the first cut." But now the common room and the voices of the nurses faded into a far void leaving the young nurse in awful loneliness. She put her hand over her stomach and pressed herself to ease the ache of her nerves. Her moist lower lip slipped from her teeth and she drew in her breath in a quick sob.

There was a rustle of skirts in the corridor and a patter of footsteps. The young nurse started and ran to the far side of the theatre pretending to be at work by the bright sterilizer. Theatre Sister came in and said sharply, " Nurse how stupid of you to leave the door open. Didn't your own sense tell you that was the wrong thing to do ? How much has the temperature fallen ? "

The young nurse looked for the thermometer in all the wrong places. Theatre Sister found it herself and said, " Tch, tch, tch ; we've lost two degrees. Turn the radiator a little more."

While the young nurse fiddled with the radiator she said angrily, " Aren't you ready to scrub up yet ? Push that hair under your cap and roll up your sleeves. Your uniform looks sloppy. Can't you tighten your belt a bit ? Hurry now ! "

They stood side by side at the wide basin washing their hands in hot carbolicky water. The Theatre Sister scrubbed her skin mercilessly with a hard brush. She handed the brush to the young nurse and told her to do the same. When they had finished their arms were red and stinging. The sister took a pair of forceps from the sterilizer and opening a drum of dressings, picked out two pieces of gauze. She tied one over her own mouth and one over the mouth of the young nurse. They looked at each other for a moment over the white masks in cold dislike. The young nurse was thinking, "Thank God she has tied her yapping mouth up ; now, p'raps she will leave me alone."

The surgeon and the anaesthetist came in. They greeted the sister with hearty good mornings but of the young nurse they took no notice whatever. Their disregard filled her with self-consciousness. Her body felt thick and awkward and her hands hung at her sides red and uncomfortable and terribly large. In the glass door of a cupboard she caught sight of her cap sticking up with its two comical ears but she did not dare to alter it. The theatre was very hot. Her cheeks were burning and wet under their covering ; the gauze seemed as heavy as wool. Enviously she watched the three people so much wiser and older than herself. They were easy and assured in all that they did, and infinitely clever.

The surgeon was a pink young man with a bald head. He looked inhumanly clean and glistening as he stood by the radiator rubbing his hands together. The anaesthetist was old and unnoticeable. It was at the surgeon Theatre Sister smiled over her gauze mask. Her manner became less sharply fussy and she began to address the young nurse in gentle tones, telling her what to do.

The young nurse brought a white coat and a mask for the old man. Theatre Sister held out a robe like a long night gown and the surgeon stepped into it. As she fastened tapes at his neck he turned and whispered to her. The young nurse saw her quick colour come and heard her giggle. She looked away quickly. The sight of the bald man and the thin spinsterish woman flirting and blushing filled her with disgust. She hated them for their ease and knowledge, for their power over her and their disregard of her and she was glad to be able to despise their foolishness. But before she could derive any strength from her attitude of scorn there was a clatter of wheels outside the door and her heart began to beat in thick heavy strokes of terror. The two doctors and the sister now stood waiting, their eyes upon the door ; the sun flowed all about their whiteness and on the nakedness of the surgeon's head and the sharp cold silver of the instruments.

The patient was brought in. He blinked in the strong light and lifted his hand to shade his eyes, then he moistened his lips and said, "Mornin' all" with ghastly, affected cheeriness. Even while he spoke the two porters seized him and hoisted him upon the trolley bed. The surgeon laughed and said, "Good morning to you, Flack. How do you feel?"

"I feel fine, thank you, sir," the patient answered, clearing the nervous huskiness from his throat.

Theatre Sister pushed him gently down on to the pillow.

"That's right," he said, miserably.

The sister turned and said sharply, "Come along, nurse."

The young nurse came out of her corner by the sterilizer and tried to remember what she should do. The sister fixed her with spiteful, gimlet eyes and the young nurse gazed back like a mesmerised animal.

"The blanket, you fool!"

"Oh yes," whispered the nurse, and unfolding the blanket she laid it over the patient. As she tucked it round him she forgot her fears for a moment and was full of sympathy for him. He had a rugged submissive face and his eyes were humble and questioning like the eyes of a child. She patted the blanket into place and said, "There," in a tiny motherly voice. When he said, "Thank you, Sister," she felt again the swaggering pride that had carried her down the corridor. But after all she was not a sister; she was a very young nurse and the clatter of steel as the surgeon arranged some knives in a dish of spirit sent the waves of terror washing over her nerves once more like a cold, deathly sea.

Now the sister had taken the patient's head and turned it upon the pillow so that the young nurse saw the bare, pitiful patch where it was shaved behind the ear. She found herself holding a basin of ether soap while the patch was washed. She brought the drum of sterilized towels and the sister pinned them over the pillow and across the patient's brow and about the rough blanket top, so that the patient looked at last all coiffed and draped and unfamiliar; so shrouded in whiteness that the small, pale area of his face took on a corpse-like hue, and when he closed his eyes so dead did he appear that the young nurse wanted to cry out, "Look! He has died before your knives could touch him. Let us leave him in peace."

The old anaesthetist climbed shortleggedly on to a high stool that stood behind the patient's head. There were bottles and long black tubes and a silver mask hung about his neck. He placed the mask gently upon the patient's nose and said in a low confidential voice, "Now breathe easily." But the patient at once seemed to find great difficulty in breathing and his hands which had been lying meekly upon the blanket began to move convulsively. The sister moved forward with a competent air and the young nurse saw that she was beckoning to her to hold the patient's hands. She did not want to touch him. A horror of him in his awful helplessness had driven out all her pity. She pretended not to understand and stood rooted where she was in her favourite refuge beside the sterilizer, very obstinate and very alarmed. In the compulsory silence it was impossible for the sister to command her with words, but the gimlet eyes grew steely hard over the white mask, and from the steel they went to black and venomous threatenings. The rabbit ears of the young nurse's cap twitched suddenly and her will crumpled. With clammy hands she gripped the wandering hands of the patient and held them upon his palpitating breast.

And now she was part of him, and the horror that engulfed him came upon her also. Sobs lay in hard lumps along her throat, but with a great effort of will she held them back. In waves of panic the blood surged about her heart and a wild loathing seized her. Her contact with the sick man seemed shameful and hideous. She hated the coarse, knotty, working-man's hands with their covering of little stiff black hairs. The square fingers gripped her own. She shuddered and tearing her hands away fastened them again high up on the wrists. The struggles of the patient grew stronger. His body heaved as though it would fling itself from the narrow trolley. She leaned her elbows upon him, feeling her strength going out in combat. Now she gripped the upper muscles of his arms as the staff nurse had told her to, and threw all her weight upon his body. His groans filled her with excitement. His movements grew weaker. She felt cruel and conquering.

At last he was still and a great stillness came upon the theatre. The surgeon had ceased playing with his knives. The sister stayed motionless, without so much as a crackle of her starched clothing. The grey head of the anaesthetist was bowed above the patient as though in sleep. Like the spirit of sleep he brooded there, and it seemed that the thing he had done to the patient had extended to the watchers in that silent place. It was a brooding, golden chamber of sleep, filled with the rhythm of the patient's heavy breathing and with the silence. The sunlight ran along the white walls and along the glass shelves like dripping water and the sleepy sweetness of ether spread its malicious, insidious peace. The air was warm and heavy with ether and sleep.

The young nurse drooped her weight upon the patient and the trolley. Her fear went out of her and a relaxed drowsiness came, easing her tight, hard muscles.

It seemed a long and delicious time they remained so. Then the old man looked up as though he recalled himself to the wakefulness of life. With one finger he rolled back the eyelid of the patient and touched the white, upturned eye. There was no quiver of response ; no protest. All the defences were gone.

The anaesthetist clambered off his stool with a sigh. The surgeon, suddenly very alert, took his place. Drowsiness still held the young nurse in false ease. She had won the struggle of the hands and the heaving body and it seemed to her she was brave and victorious and that the fears of the place were smaller than herself. Easily she stood, her hands still closed over the helpless arms in weak triumph.

Quickly there was the turned head again and the shaven skin and the knife running down it like a flash of light, with a little tearing sound. Once, twice ; and there was a line of leaping blood.

Like a stalk of corn shaken in the wind the young nurse quivered. A sob escaped from her carefully tightened throat for she had forgotten not to look and, all unguarded, it was she herself who had been pierced by the knife through her soft, child's body and her life was running out. A voice

was whispering in her half-hearing ear—a voice she would have obeyed if she could after the rigidity of death had locked her—"Pull yourself together, nurse. You'll be all right. Go over to the window for a moment."

On weak, cold legs she went, tottering like an old woman. She was glad to be weak, to have no life. Let the coldness spread over her and blot her out; she wanted it. Life was a treachery and a terror and weakness was easy. . . . easy. They were lost now behind her, those horrible ones and the snoring thing on the trolley. She could not feel her feet on the ground, or her hands on the warm radiator; the window before her was black with fog. Swaying there like a weed in a dark river she was at peace. But the tears forcing themselves from her eyes began to lighten the fog and she knew that peace was a mirage. Her feet came back to her, large and wooden, her hands, burning and clumsy. Her head was there again feeling no larger than a pin's head. What a nuisance it was! She felt pettishly annoyed.

The fog had gone from the window. She could see down the hill the little streets of the country town, and on the further hill the rough land of the common. The gorse blossom burned like flames amongst the low bushes, and the birch trees, very young and thin, stood out against the tender sky. Everything was yellow with light, even the new leaves of the birch trees. It was impossible to sleep or to die in a world so filled with stimulating light. The young nurse blinked and blinked. She remembered that in two hours' time she would be free to go out upon the common; to walk there among the children and nursemaids and strolling townsfolk, and remembering, she found it hard to believe. If the common and the gorse were real then the people behind her were a nightmare; but if the theatre were the reality how could she ever find her way back to the ordinary world? Even while she puzzled over this there came to her quickened ears the sound of a tap-tapping. She clutched the top of the radiator tightly until her hands burned. They were chiselling away the bone then; just as the staff nurse had warned her they would. Oh, if they would not ask her to look at that she could bear anything; if they could leave her there at the window till that was finished she would do meekly all else they asked.

Up the hilly street towards the hospital came a fat housewife with a shopping basket. The young nurse withdrew her eyes from the distant promise of the gorse blossom and watched this new figure with passionate interest. If she could keep the fat housewife in view while the tap-tapping lasted she would be safe. On the top of the shopping basket there was a bundle of pink rhubarb and a library book.

Rhubarb and library books. She tried to fill her consciousness with them. "Rhubarb and library books," she whispered. The fat housewife was almost gone; another moment and the corner had blotted her out as though she had never been.

There was the sound of a heavy instrument being laid upon a glass trolley.

“Good,” said the voice of the surgeon, “Splendid.”

The young nurse breathed a sigh of relief. A terrible thing was over and done with, and beyond the window of the theatre there was hope.

“Nurse,” called the sister gently. She turned back to the theatre, breathing easily. This time there was no swagger, no sense of victory. Very humbly she came and took the bowl of blood-stained water which the sister held out to her. Her hands as she took it did not shake, and as she noticed this her sense of thanksgiving was almost joy.

IN MOSCOW

By RAYMOND BANTOCK

IT would be difficult for those who were not actually in Moscow at the time, to realise the true state of affairs in that city soon after it was made the capital of the U.S.S.R. in place of Petrograd. Thousands of citizens, including the enormous number of officials and sub-officials of the new centralised government, congregated in this old provincial town, in the centre of European Russia, which had suddenly found itself transformed into the pulsating heart of a vast union of states.

The consequence was a housing shortage on a scale unprecedented in Russia. Bats, cats and rats now inhabited the stately offices and palatial residences of Petrograd (or is it Leningrad ?) and grass grew in the courts and avenues, but in the new capital every available room space was occupied. There was not money enough to build many new houses, even if it had been possible to have catered at once for such a sudden and large increase in population. The congestion became rapidly worse and soon the Government tried every possible means to entice away from Moscow all those whose presence there was not absolutely necessary. "Turn your faces to the country," became the watchword, and this led to a joke which was popular in the city at that time. "Why is there such a bad smell in Moscow just now?" it was asked. The answer was: "Because all the inhabitants are turning their faces towards the country."

But in spite of their efforts, the Government did not succeed. On the contrary, industrial development and the inevitable attraction of all those seeking advancement in life to the very hub and centre of the republic, continued to such an extent that the Commissar of "Ways and Means" was obliged to enforce the most drastic regulations concerning the division and allocation of floor space. It must be understood of course that all personal or private ownership of property had been entirely abolished in the U.S.S.R., and that consequently every building belonged to the State. Every square foot of space which could be used for residential purposes was carefully registered and allotted, each person being allowed a maximum of twenty-five square feet, a room of fifty square feet being shared by two, and so on. A family who had previously occupied a five room flat were now forced to share it with two or three other families, each being allotted 1, 1½ or 2 rooms according to the size of each room and family.

It was while these conditions were in force that Comrade Sergei Ossipovitch Kvitsinsky and Comrade Olga Oswaldovna Korolyov came to Moscow. They both hailed from Siberia, Sergei from Omsk and Olga from Tomsk. Sergei was going there to take up an appointment in the Moscow Central Office of the Sovkino, or Soviet Kinema Organization,

while Olga was sent as a representative of the Tomsk Sovkop or Soviet Co-operative movement.

Sergei had joined Olga's train at Omsk, and the two young people found themselves sitting and sleeping opposite each other during the long eight days' train journey to Moscow. Neither of them had ever been out of Siberia before, (not that it is an easy place to get out of) and common aspirations, sympathies and ideals, and constant proximity, aided to some extent by mutual attraction and the continuous vibration of the train, led them to such a pass that by the time they arrived in Moscow they had decided to join forces and get married. They would start on their great adventure in the centre of the universe together. Two would be stronger than one.

Both marriage and divorce are easy and simple matters in Soviet Russia, the only condition for the former being that each party must sign a statement to the effect that he or she is not already married ; while divorce is obtainable by husband or wife, a fortnight after application, the only reason required being the desire of the applicant ; the other party's consent, or even knowledge of the fact, being unnecessary.

The formalities were soon gone through, and Sergei and Olga became husband and wife.

The difficult problem of accommodation was solved after some anxiety. As they were both representatives of official unions they were given some preference in the long waiting list, and after five weeks they considered themselves exceptionally fortunate in being allowed the sole possession of one small room, fifty foot square ; their luck consisting not only in their being able to share a room but also in their having secured one of such a size that they would not be obliged to share any part of it with any one else.

A double bed (smallest size, owing to shortage of space) and other essential furniture were soon provided on the instalment system by the furnishing department of the Sovkop, and their little home was complete.

They went into residence in April, and everything ran smoothly for the first few weeks. They took all their meals together at restaurants, and spent their evenings at the theatre or cinema, or strolling in one of the city parks, while at night they retired to their little fifty square foot nest. Both of them felt that there was a happy significance in their being married in the Spring when the world was young, fresh and gay, and bursting into new life, when the blood runs warm in the veins, and everything promises well for the future.

But with the coming of summer, trouble began. It was all due to the excessive heat of an unusually sweltering Moscow summer. Even if conditions had been normal, they would have found it difficult to bear after the cool summers they had grown used to in Siberia.

It was supportable during the daytime, when they put in seven or eight hours' work at their separate offices, and in the evening, when they promenaded in the park ; but at night when they lay together in their modest double bed they found that the heat and stuffiness of their

tiny room began to jar on their nerves. Blankets were soon discarded; but even with the lightest covering, the confinement, the close proximity, and the heat emanating from each others' bodies became increasingly irritating. They longed for separate beds, but they could not afford to buy them, and even if they could, there would hardly have been sufficient space for two beds in such a tiny room.

The increasing heat aggravated the situation. They began to suffer from loss of sleep, and this further increased their irritability; thus the state of things rapidly grew worse in a vicious circle. Each time Sergei turned in the bed in an endeavour to screw himself up into his side, as far as possible from the heat and perspiration of his wife, the latter would cry out that she was being disturbed, and every time Olga scratched her over-heated skin, Sergei would complain equally forcibly. They tried to sleep with the door and window open, but that was of little avail. Often in despair one or other of them would get out of bed and stand by the open window in cool delicious isolation.

The heat soon became intolerable, excruciating. Whenever one of them tossing sleeplessly in bed happened to touch the other it seemed as if he or she had touched a red hot poker. The situation at last became critical.

This mutual irritation, and the consequent growing disgust they began to feel for each other, had rapidly marred all their connubial bliss and obliterated whatever respect they entertained for one another, and it was not long before they began to hate each other. At first this hate smouldered subterraneously, but it soon came out into the open. Arguments were followed by abuse, and one night shortly afterwards, during the hottest part of the summer, their mutual antipathy culminated in a violent quarrel.

By the following morning Olga had come to the conclusion that the obvious and only solution to their difficulties lay in immediate divorce, and, in order to spite her husband, she decided to steal a march on him. She left their house that morning without saying a word to him, and, instead of meeting him for lunch, she hastened to the Wives' Department of the Divorce Office. Here, after having signed the necessary forms and paid the fee, she was gratified to learn that on the following morning her husband would receive a postcard notifying him that she had divorced him, and that the decree would take effect in fourteen days' time. Then she went to a branch office of the Department of "Ways and Means" and put in an application for an immediate change of residence, and for single accommodation. She returned home that evening with a self-satisfied air. She did not divulge a word to her husband of what had taken place and looked forward eagerly to witnessing on the following morning his mortification on learning that he had been divorced. She secretly rejoiced at the simplicity and excellence of the Soviet system of affairs in general, especially in the regulations concerning divorce, and such was her inward satisfaction, and sense of gloating triumph, that she was actually able to snatch a few hours' sleep that night.

The following morning they were both awakened by the postman's knock. Four postcards were slipped under the door. Olga, all agog, watched her husband quickly lean out of bed and pick them up. She had carefully prepared her speech : " I am sorry, but it was the only thing to be done."

" Two of these are for you and two for me," said her husband, handing her two of the postcards.

Olga did not bother yet to examine hers, so anxious was she not to miss the sight of her husband's face as he read his fate ; but she was surprised to see that Sergei, equally neglectful of his own correspondence, was watching her with unusual interest. For some time they surreptitiously eyed each other in silence. Gradually their gaze fell to the postcards they held in their own hands, and at the same instant they both learnt the unwelcome news that they had divorced each other, Sergei having come to the same conclusion and having taken exactly the same steps as his wife.

Their mortification and disgust on learning that they had acted simultaneously can be imagined, but this was nothing to the shock they received when they examined their other postcards, both of which had been sent from the Department of " Ways and Means," and contained exactly similar messages which read as follows :

" Your application for change of accommodation from a double to a single room has been received and duly noted, and your name has been entered on the waiting list, but we regret to inform you that the congestion in Moscow is so great at present and the number of those whose names precede yours on the waiting list is so large, that your application cannot be considered for at least six months."

They were now both faced with the extremely unpleasant prospect of having to continue sleeping together in the same bed, although they were divorced, and added to this was the knowledge that this state of affairs would have to continue for months.

They realised to the full the inadequacy of the steps they had recently taken and the hopeless position in which they were now placed.

That morning Sergei and Olga left home without having said another word to each other, both writhing inwardly at their fate ; and from that time onwards they spoke to each other as little as possible.

Things went on much the same as before, with certain differences. Olga, for instance, resumed her maiden name, and became once more Comrade Olga Oswaldovna Korolyov, and they began to live separate and independent lives, as far as possible, staying away from home as long as they could. They now took their meals at separate restaurants, and if they happened to meet in the park in the evening, they would pass each other without a word as if they had been complete strangers. Late at night they crept to their little bed and tried to sleep, and the next seven hours were spent in an orgy of mutual though silent antipathy. This however did not last long, for their hate soon lapsed into indifference, and they

endeavoured to ignore each other as completely as possible. By mutual though silent agreement the various articles of furniture were divided and appropriated. Each had his own chair, his own half of the table, his own corner of the room for undressing in, and so on. The bed of course could not be divided, and that had to be shared as before. Only very few words were spoken, and only what was absolutely necessary. The day, a fortnight after their quarrel, on which their divorce took effect, passed unfêted, almost unnoticed.

Thus things went on for several weeks, and in the meantime the summer's heat began to abate, and the nights gradually, though imperceptibly, became more tolerable. The divorced couple began to grow resigned to their fate.

Autumn set in, and with it the first signs of cold. Sergei and Olga were delighted to find that they could now sleep undisturbed, and without continual irritation all night. Their resignation was complete.

It grew colder and colder. The blankets were put back on the bed one by one. But still it grew colder.

One night in November, Sergei awoke to find himself shivering in bed. Unconscious of what he was doing, he rolled against his former wife and finding a pleasing warmth there, soon dozed off again. That night Olga dreamt that she was back in Siberia, and that she was lying quite naked on the ground in the middle of a lonely plain. Snow was falling all around, and she felt chained to the ground by some force which she could not resist. She trembled with cold and with the fear that she would be frozen to death. And when she thought her last hour had come, a great hairy brown bear suddenly loomed up out of the snow and lay down beside her. She was numb with terror ; but presently she noticed that the bear was warm, and that the snow was melting all around. She nestled close to the bear and felt comforted.

Early in the morning she awoke and found that the bear was Sergei, her former husband. She tried to push him away from her but he lay there like a log, fast asleep, with a happy and contented expression on his face, and try as she might, she could not move him. She got out of bed but found that it was still too early to get dressed. It was bitterly cold. She waited for five minutes and then got back into bed again, and, turning her face to the wall, went to sleep. Shortly afterwards Sergei awoke and, finding himself in unusual proximity to his former wife, he withdrew at once, out of force of habit, to his own side of the bed and tried to sleep. Olga dreamt that the bear had suddenly jumped up and run away, and that she was left shivering and naked in the snow. She awoke and found that Sergei had shifted to his own side of the bed.

This sort of thing went on for several nights, sometimes one, and sometimes the other being the intruder beyond the rightful boundaries. In the meantime, the Russian winter had set in with all its usual terrible and intense cold. The citizens of Moscow went about in fur coats and caps, snow lay piled in the streets, and everything was white and hoary.

It was now far too cold to walk in the park in the evenings, and the divorced couple had for some time made a habit of going to bed early. But one night, a few weeks later, Sergei was delayed by a visit to the opera, and did not arrive home till after midnight. Olga lay shivering in bed. She had lain there for two hours unable to get to sleep on account of the cold. Sergei came in, warm from his walk home. He took off his fur coat, and, sitting down at the table began to go through the programme and review the opera in his mind, humming to himself some of the tunes that had pleased him most. Half an hour passed. Gradually the cold filtered into his bones, and he began to shiver. "It's time I was in bed," he said to himself.

Suddenly he heard a voice from the bed :

"Won't you come to bed now, dear ? It's getting so late."

"Right you are, dear," he said. He hastened to divest himself of his clothes, and was soon between the blankets which Olga had warmed for him.

Sergei and Olga looked at each other in bed. It was the first time they had looked into each others' eyes for a long while. Suddenly something quite inexplicable happened. A veil was lifted from their eyes, and in a flash everything was changed. Sergei suddenly wondered why he had never perceived before how pretty and comforting was his former wife's face. Olga was equally surprised to discover in her former husband a strength and protective manliness which must have hitherto entirely escaped her notice. Without their knowing why, a tacit admiration for each other suddenly glowed and burst into flame. But it was not only admiration—they felt that there was something else, a new feeling for each other that they had not experienced before, not even when they were first married. Was it love, real love entering their hearts for the first time ? They could not say. All they knew definitely was that it was something beautiful, something they did not wish to analyse.

Only one more fact need be definitely recorded here.

Comrade Sergei Ossipovitch Kvitsinsky and Comrade Olga Oswaldovna Korolyov were married again on Christmas Day.

THE FACE

By PETER FLEMING

"WHO am I?" he said aloud.

There was no wind. The question died slowly in the bright still air. He felt embarrassed, as if he had made a bad joke.

At any rate I'm not dumb, he thought defiantly. He had lost his memory.

He passed his hand over his face. Clean-shaven . . . Beyond that it told him nothing. The bump at the back of his skull throbbed with an unassuming persistence that had the force of irony. He wanted to swear, but the unnatural echoes of his late soliloquy gelded the impulse of its spontaneity.

Along the top of the railway embankment, his immediate horizon, the heat-haze jiggled along the metals. (I must have fallen out of a train, he thought. Or jumped. Or been thrown . . .) The telegraph wires hummed a soothing, impersonal tune to an imperceptible breeze. A bullfinch, very magnificent against the blue sky, sat on the nearest pole and sang.

I never knew the name of that bird, he told himself: that is not one of the things I have forgotten.

He rose tentatively to his feet. The bullfinch flew away, expressing in its switchback flight a brisk and bourgeois fatalism.

It's very pretty, he thought. His head was hurting less. He scrambled awkwardly up the embankment and looked round him.

The countryside was flat but gay, chequered in bright, explicit colours. To look at it gave him great pleasure. Whoever I was, he decided, I didn't see much of this sort of thing. His eyes travelled over it slowly and with relish.

Square, solid little fields: hedges thick and rounded with the summer's vegetation: cattle humbly attendant on a dried-up pond: a white horse standing in the shade of a great tree: a phalanx of larches, their feathery spearheads a marvel of immobility: rabbits: a woodpigeon: burnished corn-stooks, their short shadows flung back like cows . . . It was a scene whose chief grace lay beneath it, in familiarity, in security, in the charm of wonted things. Yet for him it was strange, almost unearthly. His feeling for it had the wild, invading novelty of love at first sight.

He said aloud: "This is my cup of tea, all right"; and sat down complacently on the end of a sleeper.

* * *

Who am I?

Between the all-important question and his brain a sense of divine disorientation danced, impalpable and irritating, like the heat-haze. He admired—he even felt inclined to worship—the lush yet tenuous serenity

around him ; and this impulse got in his way. He wanted to think things out, but the main issue of his predicament was obscured by its setting. He was like a man who has been told to make his will in the Taj Mahal. He found it hard to concentrate.

With an effort, he drew his eyes down from the thriftless bounty of the landscape and looked at his shoes. They were old and black. They had a certain humdrum cogency. They had played their part in his life, wherever it had been. They were his. Possessions suggested a link with continuity . . .

Possessions ! Of course . . . From the unnumbered inessentials of his past his mind retrieved the Desert Island, and he remembered the tradition of Castaways. After returning thanks to Providence, the first thing you did was to examine the contents of your pockets.

He did so.

His pockets contained a pencil, a packet of cheap cigarettes (but no matches), a folded copy of a daily paper, four pound notes, and some loose change. Never were personal effects more impersonal.

He took off his coat. The tab under the collar was newer than the coat, but blank. He had not even a tailor's name with which to run down his identity. He was wearing a second-hand suit.

He sat down again on the sleeper and picked up the newspaper. Something at the back of his mind attached great importance to it. It told him that the month was August : that there was a revolution in Portugal : that Larwood ought never to have been dropped : that a business man had been seen wearing white ducks : that a British film company was going to produce " Cymbeline " on Salisbury Plain : that youth must be given a chance : that the police were looking for a chartered accountant who had murdered his wife : that the exodus to the sea-side was greater, if anything, than ever : that a young clerk had been left a fortune by his employer : and that skirts were going to be shorter.

He found himself devouring all this information, and its trimmings, with a certain desperation. In some corner of his scoured mind there lingered the ghost of a conviction that this paper was important. Like the cigarettes, the pencil, and the money, it had some relevance to his previous existence : but he believed it was a more immediate relevance than theirs—some special, circumstantial significance, just beyond the reach of his groping thoughts. He was sure he had carried it unlike the other things, for some reason outside routine. As a link with his unattainable past, his instincts pinned their faith to it, and to it alone.

When he had glanced through it, he glanced through it again. He tried to make his mind a blank—to put aside the rabble of preconceptions that bayed on the vanished heels of his identity. He leant back on the tenuous framework of his instincts ; by them alone he had some hope of threading the labyrinth in which his memory was lost. He read the paper three times over.

His conviction of his pertinence was not shaken. It crystallized in a vague belief that some item in the news directly affected him. Gradually

something—whether it was a guess, or a hope, or a memory—focussed his attention on the centre page. His eye went up and down its columns abstractedly, but with purpose, like an owl quartering a stubble-field. The centre page was a garish, patternless mosaic of little dramas. The more he studied it, the more obvious it did become that in most of them he could have played no part, since the protagonists (where these were men) were either dead, or in prison, or at any rate not in a position to exchange their specified whereabouts for an English railway embankment.

But there were two columns which stood out, with almost too much plausibility, as conceivable interpretations of his past. One was that devoted to the chartered accountant who had murdered his wife. The crime appeared to have been planned with skill and foresight. Its perpetrator had made good his escape. The police were offering a reward for information leading to his arrest, and the column concluded with a summary of the circulated description, supplemented by a photograph, reasonably clear, of a youthful, entirely undistinguished face. The murderer had a small moustache. The description stated that his hair was red, his age 30, and his height 5 ft. 9 ins. It was not known what clothes he was wearing.

"If it wasn't for the moustache," thought the man, caressing the reassuring smoothness of his upper lip, "that might be me. At least, it might if I've got red hair . . ."

Grinning at the fantastic necessity, he tried to pull his hair down over his eyes; but it was too short.

"Wish I had a mirror," he thought. It was absurd, not even knowing what one looked like. Besides, a mirror would have helped with the second column, for that too contained a photograph. It was a photograph of the young clerk who had inherited a fortune from his eccentric employer. He was believed to be ignorant, as yet, of his good luck: since the employer's death he had been away on holiday, and his present whereabouts were unknown. He was described, not very constructively, as being 28 years old and fond of tennis. The photograph, evidently an old one, showed a pleasant, boyish face, as devoid of characteristics as a loaf. The hair appeared to be dark. There was no moustache.

As he looked at it, he became conscious that his heart was beating faster. He felt a little dizzy.

"If that's me," he said aloud, "I'm in luck."

He spoke in a voice shy and shaky with excitement, like a child who sees a parcel brought into its nursery and cannot help asking, "Is that for me?" But, like the child's, his voice expressed the barest minimum of doubt. His instinct told him he had found his identity. He was relying on his instinct.

The distant rumble of a train throbbed along the heavy, sweet air. The rail began to vibrate gently against the base of his spine. The man stood up, folded his precious newspaper, and put it into his pocket. Then he scrambled down the embankment.

Half a mile away, the train chugged with boorish self-importance out of the inviolable beauty of a beech-wood. The man felt a great sense of elation as its curved and rippling flank bore down on him. He waved his arms and grinned, uttering incoherent little noises of pleasure, like a dog. Those blank faces, gazing out of its windows in a state of suspended curiosity, were a cross-section of humanity, new, surprising, and strange. For him, alone of all the world, there was nothing stale under the sun.

The passengers looked down at him in vacant, ephemeral surmise. The train dwindled into the distance, foreshortening itself with a surreptitious air. He was left alone.

* * *

The man climbed once more on to the embankment.

It doesn't much matter which way I go, he thought : and set off after the train, walking on the sleepers. They imposed on him a mincing, irksome gait. To someone in the fields below him it would have seemed as if he was coquetting with the sky-line.

He was supremely happy. The smell of clover : dog-roses in a hedge : the braggart plumage of a jay—all the tiny threads in the texture of a country summer affected him like wine. His head was turned.

This is the sort of place for me, he thought ; I'm going to live in the country after this.

He was thinking of the legacy.

A mile further on, the line dived into a fir-wood. It was cool under the trees. Pigeons cooed and clattered in their upper branches. A green woodpecker fled away up a ride, defying enchantment with wild laughter. The man walked on through the dappled shade, smiling.

On the other side of the wood there was a little bridge, where the railway crossed a lane.

I'm tired of walking on these sleepers, thought the man : I might as well try the lane.

Some way away, he could see a square grey church-tower, set in a quilted clump of beech and chestnuts. Roofs, half-hidden, showed here and there among the trees. It looked like a small village. The lane went towards it. He slithered down the embankment into the lane and headed for the tower, gratefully lengthening his stride.

He still felt that keen delight in everything about him. He shuffled through the fine white dust, kicking it up like a child, till his shoes were fantastically white ; he took a genuine pleasure in watching the wrinkles behind the toe-caps, which closed and opened with every step, and thus retained a little seam of the original black at their bottoms. He knew, by now, that he had been a townsman all his life. He had never seen dust like this before.

He felt tremendously expansive. He wanted to meet one of his strange, intriguing fellow-creatures. He longed for someone to share the story of

his most extraordinary experience ; but more than anything he wanted someone to confirm his marvellous slice of luck.

In his own mind it had come to need very little confirmation. The newspaper in his pocket was his only link with reality ; and the interpretation he put on the clues it offered him was the nearest approach to a concrete and personal thing in the vacuum in which he so strangely found himself. Doubt had been evicted by desire. Conjecture, in the absence of all other mental preoccupations, had crystallized into belief. The man who had lost his memory was now firmly convinced that he was none other than the missing clerk, heir to a fortune. He went forward gaily.

Round a bend in the road he came on a policeman. The policeman was leaning on his bicycle and mopping his forehead with a dirty white handkerchief. The man approached him with a tremulous, eager smile.

"Can you tell me the name of that village ?" he asked, pointing up the lane.

"Wittenden," said the policeman, looking at him with mild curiosity.

"Thank you." The man was starving for conversation. "Hot, isn't it ?"

"Ar," said the policeman judiciously, "it is that."

Nevertheless he put on his helmet, with the air of one capable of rising superior to circumstances at the call of duty.

With some vague idea that a contradictory gesture might prolong their meeting, the man took off his shabby felt hat and wiped the sweat from his forehead. The policeman had placed his foot on the step of his bicycle, preparatory to gaining the saddle by that method of surprise attack from the rear which is still prevalent in rural districts. When he saw the hat taken off, he paused, and stared. Several emotions, half-disguised, marched clumsily across his large, red face, like a Shakespearean army across the stage. Then he seemed to come to a decision. With a valedictory grunt, he achieved the saddle, and pedalled off up the lane, ponderously, but at a good speed.

The man put on his hat again, rather ruefully. This new life was no certain sanctuary, after all ; the outriders of discontent were hammering on its doors. Like a child who suspects for the first time that his clockwork toy is capable of running down, he hardly liked to anatomize his feelings. He only knew that ecstasy had been quietly dethroned.

As he walked on up the dusty lane, he wondered, absently, why the policeman had stared.

* * *

He felt better when he reached the village. The sun was falling back on the earth and shadows lay across the street in cool abandon. But it was still quite warm. Clamorous jackdaws tumbled round the square church tower like creatures bathing in some private, invisible element. The crooked street was so peaceful that even sound seemed to loiter there. Voices, footfalls, the rattle of chains at a well-head, all the small, muffled

noises that come through open doors travelled to and fro very quietly, very aimlessly, as if they wanted to be out of date before they were heard.

The man smiled a bemused smile, I should like to live here, he thought.

He was hungry and thirsty. An inn, white, with a stone roof, stood at the next corner. It was called the Blue Lion. He went towards it.

A great deal of animated talk tumbled out of the open door of the bar room, like potatoes out of a sack. The man paused for a second outside it, overcome with an unexpected feeling of shyness. Then he conquered his reluctance and walked in.

The talk stopped with startling abruptness. Only one fat man, leaning up against the bar with his back to the door, went on speaking. He had not noticed the intruder.

"Wot's to prevent him shaving it off?" he was asking, in a loud, dogmatic, and persuasive voice; "That's wot I say. Wot's to—"

His neighbour touched him on the elbow. The fat man looked slowly round, saw the stranger, gasped, and drank some beer vehemently.

The man who had lost his memory felt all his shyness return, and with it a graver, instinctive uneasiness. This sudden silence had a significance which he could not grasp, but feared. He was out of his depth.

Nevertheless he walked forward to the bar with what unconcern he could muster. As he did so, he noticed out of the corner of his eye that his friend the policeman was in the room, over by the dart-board: the centre of a group.

"Beer," he said. His voice sounded unnatural.

"Pint?" asked the barman. He did not meet the stranger's eyes. He was looking towards the policeman.

"Yes. And some bread and cheese, if you've got it."

The barman turned away to draw the beer. The man who had lost his memory took off his hat, put his elbows on the bar, and hunched his shoulders. He began to examine his finger-nails with an air of great preoccupation. He was on the defensive . . .

An unreasoning fear—the fear of a child about to be unjustly punished—grew up slowly within him. The seconds passed. He dared not look round. He had a feeling that they were closing in on him. The room was darker than it had been before. Someone had shut the door. A floor board creaked . . .

He saw the barman, returning with the tankard, hesitate. His eyes were fixed on something behind the stranger.

He felt as if he was going to be struck. He closed his eyes. . .

A hand was laid gently on his arm.

"A-a-a-a-h!" screamed the man who had lost his memory. He opened his eyes. In a mirror behind the bar he saw his own face.

It was chalk-white, beneath a crop of short, red hair.

DELIRIOUS *TEMPI* IN MUSIC

(An Address delivered to the Gilbert and Sullivan Society)

By DAME ETHEL SMYTH

I MUST begin by apologising both for the matter and the manner of this address, but once the word 'flu has been uttered I know you will understand and accord me your indulgence. During convalescence, when my thoughts turned nervously to the invitation you had been good enough to extend to me, it was comic to reflect that the text of my discourse was to be the criminality of anybody doing anything too fast ! " Is it really thinkable that *hurrying* could ever be a temptation ? " you asked yourself as you crawled to the coal scuttle and endeavoured to seize with the tongs and drive home two lumps of coal, each of which seemed to weigh half a ton ? Even if the house were on fire, would you be able, would you even wish, to run ?

For worse than enfeeblement of arms and legs is the paralysis that for the time being slows down the motions of your spirit, and goes on slowing them down long after you imagine you are quite well. Anything connected with Gilbert and Sullivan as a rule whips up such intelligence as I possess to a thousand revolutions per second ; but only two short weeks ago, the mind refusing to bite on anything, one caught oneself saying . . . " rapid *tempi* ? what can anyone have to say about *tempi* ? . . . and if it comes to that what *are* *tempi* ? Are they animal, vegetable, mineral or what ? " And then I caught myself vaguely thinking about the Vale of Tempe in Greece . . .

Enough ! You all know the condition, for you have all had the disease. But before turning from the absorbing subject of ailments to the comparatively negligible one of art, and as we are about to discuss the matter of pace, may I just say this : whatever crimes of impatience you commit, *don't try to hurry up the finale of a bout of 'flu*. It is not of the slightest use. All one can do is to settle down quietly to resembling the classical piece of chewed string for weeks and weeks.

* * *

And now for music !

As is only natural in an age of racing cars and aeroplanes, the god of rapidity has his finger in every pie. To cover the ground as quickly as possible seems to be the prevalent ambition ; what wonder, therefore, if nine out of ten conductors, dealing with music of a witty, humorous or conspicuously cheerful character, aim at what is called " snappiness " ? that is, forge ahead at a pace which suggests that the orchestra has to catch the 11.55 train.

Now, regrettable as it is to hear purely instrumental music thus driven to death (as happens nowadays to the *scherzi* of all Symphonies) it is ridiculous, idiotic, and uncultured thus to treat music that is wedded to words. Think of it ! In all comic opera the word plays a supremely impor-

tant part ; and much of the magic of Gilbert and Sullivan lies in the fact that Sullivan knew exactly at what rate the point of Gilbert's wit could best be intensified and brought home. You know I had the honour of Sullivan's friendship, and he once demonstrated to me how he tackled Gilbert's lyrics. He would sit at the table and rap out the words to himself, say, in $\frac{3}{4}$ time ; then in $\frac{2}{4}$; after that he would scribble—not on music paper but on a bit of foolscap—crotchets and quavers, till he had settled the heart-beat of the verse to his satisfaction. And while doing this, the melody would beget itself almost unconsciously.

Let me remark in passing that I have never read any Sullivan memoirs, and possibly the process here described is among the things you have all known since you were infants in arms. If so, you must pity my simplicity (as the child's hymn has it) for informing you that Queen Anne is dead.

On the other hand, supposing some very different account is given elsewhere of how he solved the composer's problem, don't let that upset you ; nor, please, say among yourselves, "What frightful lies Ethel Smyth tells about Sullivan's methods !" Think of writers on golf ! Why, if you read in some plus-4 man's latest book—written, say, in 1931—"how to get out of a bunker," and then look up the instructions given by the same master in 1925, you may find, that as with politicians and other humans, people's ideas as to how a difficulty should be tackled change with years. I remember one of the most honoured among my friends, Miss Joyce Wethered, telling me that no sooner has she issued a manual on golf, than it dawns upon her that all she has written is, relatively speaking, rubbish, and the next instructions she puts forth will be pitched in quite a different key ! She then added, "I'm always rather glad this happens, because otherwise one might begin caricaturing oneself." I ventured then to suggest, that as you get older, the details of your method (though never the broad lines that lead to salvation) might vary in obedience to muscular or nervous changes in your own body and soul ; but alas I am unable to repeat her reply to this sapience because I can't remember it ! Anyhow, as regards Sullivan, at the time I am speaking of, the procedure described above held the field, and I think it improbable that he abandoned it later, because one sees how exactly it fitted the problem he was continually solving with such unequalled brilliancy.

I cannot impress upon you too strongly my conviction, that when words are adequately mated with music, the pace is pre-determined, implicit in the structure ; and if you adopt a *tempo* which renders it impossible for the singer to give full point to the text, you are murdering both words and music.

I might illustrate my theory as to the pre-determination of pace by an analogy from the animal world.

The build of a thoroughbred steeplechaser differs from that of a weight-carrying hunter ; their joints are hung differently, and their temperaments go with their build. Now if you are stupid enough to demand of the chaser the deliberate methods of the heavy horse, you prove yourself to be a bad

horseman, are doing violence to your mount, and deserve your possible fate—a broken neck. Similarly when notions derived from engines of swiftness are brought to bear on a delicate complex art like that of Gilbert and Sullivan it is a proof of bad musicianship. But though the conductor is breaking the back of the music, there is, alas, little danger of his breaking his own neck!

One can account in many ways for this lack of musical good taste. One cause, even in people who ought to know better, is a subconscious but servile fear of not being thought smart unless they rush through certain parts of a score at full gallop. Another is, perhaps, that these works being so popular, so constantly taken on tour, conductors get stale. For them the fine edge of the design is worn down, and they cheat their boredom by organising obstacle races. Yet another cause is the point I mentioned a few minutes ago, that a second-rate musical intelligence fatally connects the idea of wit and gaiety with “snappiness.” But on the whole I believe this evil is owing to a microbe that aeroplanes and racing cars scatter as they pass; a microbe that induces the infected one to believe that rapidity is the be-all and end-all of existence, and that if you don’t bow down to this fetish, you risk being a bore.

Now, by way of showing how wildly wrong this idea is, may I refer you to an experience we have all been through? Let us suppose one has embarked on a description of what happened at the Stores; of our celebrated squabble with the rector; of how one lost and found one’s ticket going up to London, or anything you like. The incident really was funny; of that there is no doubt; very funny. But as our narration proceeds we notice the increasing gloom of So-and-So’s countenance, the glazed oyster eye of someone else, and a painful suspicion wakes in our bosom that the story is less amusing than we fondly believed.

Now what is to be done about it? I maintain that if, in your agitation, you begin to hurry, to gabble, to take short cuts, all is lost. On the contrary you must catch yourself firmly by the head, and with great deliberation tell your listeners what *he* said—what *you* said—in fact hold your course with calm and apparent confidence. It may be that your fear was justified; perhaps you *are* being a bore; but you won’t mend matters by slurring your points. You may stop short; you may commit suicide—anything you like; but don’t give yourself away by foolish scamperings among your parts of speech.

I know a quite intelligent woman whose conversation I should really enjoy if I could catch even a quarter of what she says, instead of desperately trying to pick up a clue among gasps, gobblings, and helter-skelterings that scatter my wits almost before she has opened her mouth. Consulting a mutual friend it was explained to me that, her family being rather more brainy than herself, the poor thing had been haunted from childhood upwards by the dread of being a bore, and this headlong style “o’er moor and fen, o’er rock and torrent,” adopted in the schoolroom, had now become an ingrained habit! Whereby of course her own end is pathetically

defeated ; for if you can't catch even the general drift of a person's remarks, you naturally will be apt to think that person a bore—or at least move on as soon as politeness permits to some more comprehensible conversationalist.

* * *

To go back to our starting point. Having drawn attention to what is I think a crying evil—the intrusion into art of notions that, however admirable elsewhere, are sadly out of place in music the charm of which is dainty, deliberate elegance—a larger question now emerges : namely, how, when and where it becomes a solemn duty to resist for all we are worth a given tendency of our time.

You will not find much competition for the *rôle* of conscientious objector in such a case ! To go against the feeling of the majority is never an easy or a pleasant job, as we all realise when people are ecstatically commending some point of view they consider beyond question but with which you happen to disagree. The other day a man friend of mine told me he had gone into his club shortly after the first flying feat of Amy Johnson, and found a group of old fogies maintaining that no girl whose mother is alive has a right to risk her life ! Finding this proposition rather excessive, my friend was courageous enough to dissent, and he tells me he was almost lynched !

Of course I only quote this anecdote as a joke, but the fact remains that it really does require courage and independence, indeed a peculiar kind of originality, to fly in the face of accepted notions. I say "originality," thinking of the best definition I ever came across of this rare quality. It was Sir James Fitz-James Stephen who coined this apothegm which I am fond of quoting : "Originality," he said, "does not consist in saying what no one has ever said before, *but in saying exactly what you think yourself.*" Now we all agree that originality does not grow on every gooseberry-bush, and that the stain of contact with commonplace minds is difficult to avoid ; therefore, a young conductor of 1932, who realises and stands up against the vandalism of racing through the delicate, comic ditties of Gilbert and Sullivan gives proof of originality in the Fitz-James Stephen sense. Such a one is evidently thinking for himself, is capable of brushing aside the vulgar, mechanical restlessness of his age and visualising this homegrown music as a foreign musician, coming fresh to it as to a new art, would do. A Toscanini or a Bruno Walter, for instance, would pick up the true *tempo* of a Gilbert and Sullivan lyric in their stride ; indeed Toscanini is a glorious all-round instance of power to resist the domination of aeroplane notions in music. But it requires great moral courage on the part of a young fellow to refrain from turning the *scherzo* department of his scores into steeplechases, seeing what all the other young fellows are doing !

The most interesting examples of the beneficent effect of standing up against the influences of your time, if you yourself happen to be constructed on another plan, are to be found on the field of artistic creation. Such resistance has often ended in the permanent enrichment of art or literature.

There have been strange immunities ; writers who seemed to bear a charmed existence, who, like the fabled saint, have walked scatheless among the wild beasts of modernity, pursuing their calm way to our everlasting gain. (By the by, please don't misjudge me if I allude to the spirit of modernity as a wild beast, nor confuse me with a certain Royal Duke, who, in the year 1870, talking of the army, remarked that " every change is for the worse ! " No ! I only dragged in the wild beasts because I wanted to make that point about the Saint ; St. Geneviève I believe it was.)

In this connection I invite you to think of Rossini. Here was a man living in the heyday of Wagner's career, who continued to write masterpieces so utterly uninfluenced by Wagner that it seems hard to believe they were contemporaries ! Our own Sullivan is another instance of the same thing. Apparently these two men (and in *The Barber* Rossini touched the apex of his genius) felt instinctively that between them and the new music a gulf was fixed, and without the slightest difficulty avoided tumbling into it. I am not sure to what extent Sullivan admired Wagner, though no one can forget Rossini's immortal remark about *The Ring* consisting of good moments and bad quarters of an hour (" de bons moments et de mauvais quarts d'heure ") ; but my point is that both men realised that in their pie there was not room even for Wagner's little finger.

I am sure that in painting similar anomalies exist ; that certain creative spirits must always have been capable of resisting a main stream and begetting masterpieces right and left of it. Yes, masterpieces, though possibly not on the most supremely grand scale. Speaking as an ignoramus, perhaps the Pre-Raphaelite school might be pressed into the argument. In fact, to paraphrase the French Member of Parliament's remark, " If only I knew the history of painting I could quote you dozens of instances ! " And as to whether the work of these mysterious artists who managed to defy the bacillus of their own day is or is not on the scale of a Beethoven or a Rembrandt, what on earth does it matter ? In the House of Art there are many mansions, and if a poet has written three perfect lyrics and nothing else, he is sure of the reward of a good and faithful servant of Art. Can we do without the Alps because they are dwarfed by the Hindoo Koosh ? . . . or because of the Alps need we throw the Dolomites, or even the Welsh mountains, overboard ?

On the subject of mountains a relation of the late Lord Balfour told me an amusing story which is rather to the point. All that family are either of a scientific, philosophical, or scholarly turn of mind, and it appears that as a child the youngest Miss Balfour shed bitter tears on discovering that the Himalayas are higher than the Lammermoors. But she was completely comforted when it was pointed out to her that the Lammermoors are the older geological formation ! This proves that if you can't have it one way you can another.

Well, I will not further elaborate the point that if you have a longing to express your thought, but cannot make a sincere use of the idiom (as it is

called) of the day, a quiet disregard of that idiom may well end in the emergence of work so genuine, so personal, so complete in itself that it will never become old-fashioned. The whole thing, you see, is a question of style ; when style steps in, it brings with it the magic gift of agelessness ; the thought conveyed, whether in terms of literature, printing, or music, belongs to all time. Of course it is probable that the art-snobs of the moment and the day-flies of the Press may turn up their noses at work that floats on what will seem to them a backwater ; that is why the *Barber of Seville* and *Faust* began by being almost snuffed out of existence. And if the public, whose taste I have ever ranked higher than that of the experts, had not been utterly swept away by Gilbert and Sullivan, the early history of these operas might have been that of the *Barber*. The other day I was shown by one of your Vice-Presidents a collection of Press notices of some of the original Savoy performances. Up to then I believed I had not much to learn in that particular connection, but those reviews made one fairly stretch one's eyes !

The patronising, almost sneering tone of them is partly accounted for by the extreme modesty of Sullivan, but also in great measure by an idea prevalent in those days, which possibly survives to-day in England, that light opera must not be taken seriously. A scholar of my acquaintance tells me that some learned Greek of Aristophanes' day makes fun of analogous highbrow-Philistinism. Be that as it may, the annals of 40 years ago duly record performances at our Festivals of one boring Oratorio after another, including singularly dank ones by Sullivan himself, all of which were then hailed as masterpieces, and to-day are gone even farther west than the part of England sacred to the Three Choirs Festivals !

Meanwhile, as I have said, this same laudatory Press—unconsciously perhaps and luckily in vain—was doing its level best to damn the operas with faint praise ; and the oddest part of it is that Sullivan himself seems to have been a victim of the illusion that so called serious music must *a priori* be more " important " than comic music ; for as I related in my memoirs, when in reply to his question as to which I considered his masterpiece I named *The Mikado*, he was genuinely vexed, and would have preferred me to say *Ivanhoe* or better still *The Golden Legend* (of which he gave me the full score).

* * *

To return to what is a constant preoccupation of certain minds—and I confess mine is among them—the difficulty of resisting the spirit of your age, even on fields where you clearly perceive it is working havoc.

Behold a curious thing. As Mr. Leonard Woolf points out in *After the Deluge* (which is a study of communal psychology) you would imagine democracy must surely tend to increased independence of outlook ; but so far exactly the reverse seems to be the case. Look round you. On all sides you will observe a growing tendency to uniformity of habit and idea for which of course the ownership of the Press by a handful of millionaires is largely to blame. You can prove this thesis by glancing at the illustrated

papers. In the bad old days great landowners were able to dictate to their tenants how to vote ; but at all events they were unable to produce forcibly on their countenances the exact smile you may note in every young man or woman who contrives to get " featured " in the daily Press. Nor is it only the young who smile for their lives in this way ; even the middle-aged, even the old, dare not dispense with this outward and visible sign of a " nice cheery temperament " and alas, the camera deals rather unmercifully with the wrinkles of smiling veterans ! It's all part of the same thing. Even as a hankering after " brighter " music ends in steeplechases among crotchets and quavers, so the desire to be thought a " dear fellow " or a " sweet girl " ends in mechanical, denture-exposing grimaces. (I am delighted, by the by, to see that Mr. Drage's famous smile which used to enrage and nauseate us on the walls of every Tube station, has at long last followed the lead of the Cheshire cat, and I humbly think I may claim a small share in its disappearance !)

This craze for uniformity in thought, word, and deed, penetrates every department of life. I cannot tell you how often at Woking, where I live, owners of run-about cars ask me why I don't start one myself. Now why should everyone have a car, especially people who dislike adding to the complications of life and desire to keep the use of their legs as long as possible ? I often put the matter thus to car-owning enquirers (and have difficulty sometimes in not adding, " Besides which I can't afford a car *any more than you can* " !)

Again, we are suburbans at Woking, and for some reason or other rather restless. Anyhow people are for ever getting rid of their houses ; and, as in the car business, I am perpetually being asked why I don't sell my cottage. " You would get a lot of money for a house of just that size nowadays," they add ! There it is again, you see ! Everyone is selling their domicile, so why not sell yours ? No one seems to consider such trifling matters as having thrown out roots, nor the folly, after building a house to suit your own needs, of turning out and embarking upon heaven knows what structural adventure, merely for the sake of a paltry turnover of a few pounds. Here you have one of the worst instances of the spirit one so greatly deprecates—a symptom of one of the worst diseases that can befall self-respecting human beings—this craze for doing a thing because everyone else is doing it. But on this particular point of a little more money being considered so desirable an end in itself that it overrides all other considerations—such as staying quietly where you are, and having leisure for the things that matter, work, books, and friends—I eagerly seize any and every occasion to fulminate ; would even revert to a favourite poem of the schoolgirls of my generation, and cry out with Longfellow " Peace, peace ! Orestes-like I breathe this prayer ! " if I thought anyone would have the faintest idea what one was talking about.

And now for a final confession.

Having honourably started (however much I may have divagated since) by inveighing generally against restlessness in music, and pointing out its

objectionableness in Gilbert and Sullivan in particular, I must no longer conceal the fact from you that for the last year or two I have given up attending Gilbert and Sullivan performances ! What with the scampering *tempi*—and still more the shameless, commercial encore-traffic that pulls these perfect constructions out of gear—I found that listening is more a source of anger and disgust than pleasure.* Some day there may be a violent revulsion of feeling on this topic, but not yet awhile, I fear. Increased musical culture alone can deliver us from evils of this kind, just as nothing but a wider knowledge and practice of the laws of hygiene finally got rid of small-pox and the Black Death. These things can't be done in a day.

But inasmuch as I rarely permit myself to grumble unless I can at the same time suggest something that might be done about it, let me in conclusion say this.

Of course I don't know how you votaries of Gilbert and Sullivan feel about these matters, but if anyone here agrees with me—and, I may add, with every cultured person I have ever come across—that the bad modern practices I refer to degrade a peculiarly delicate art, I invite you to take action about it ! Write to the papers ! Fire off postcards to the Directors ! Become vocal on the subject whenever you have a chance ! Don't quietly sit down under it !

To those who don't mind, or rather perhaps like, these rapid *tempi*, I would gently suggest that if you are racing along in a car at 50 or 60 miles an hour certain beauties in the landscape must necessarily escape you ; hence you will be prepared to admit that something similar may happen in music, and allow, at least in theory, that certain shades in the exquisitely-pointed Gilbert and Sullivan humour perhaps depend (and it is my conviction that they *do* depend) on a given pace-presentment. As for the encores, anyone, however accustomed to them, must surely see here a slopping over of wholesome enthusiasm into mawk and hysteria ; even as Mafeking night was a disgusting travesty of a natural emotion of relief ; or as another and yet another whisky and soda turns a harmless reveller into a drunken brute such as you have seen in *Cavalcade* and, alas, perhaps in real life !

Some of you who feel as I do may have been held back from protesting by a familiar blend of humility and laziness. “ Why,” you said to yourself, “ should *my* view be of any importance ? ” I tell you that everyone's view, if it be honest and recurs persistently in spite of temptations to tune in with the current view, is important ; and by voicing it you may at least help to free a distinguished and unique art from disfiguring growths. Make it clear, if such is the case, that you detest these mechanical encores, which too often are given without the public having even asked for them ! If you didn't catch the words, say so—(and seeing that no one could *speak* words at such a pace, even if merely commenting on the weather to a friend, you probably will *not* have caught them !) Of course you may know them by heart, but that's not the same thing ; for the delightful part of a perfect

* This address was given before the present revival at the Savoy Theatre.

marriage between words and music is the way the lips of the right sort of singer will, if the expression be permitted, dish up one of those flawless little bits of verbal and musical declamation that may be found on every page, almost, of Gilbert and Sullivan. In Grand Opera the exact words are relatively unimportant : (I say "relatively" and mean relatively). The line of song, the musical gesture, the broad orchestration, the scenic effects, get the main points across somehow ; but in delicate lace-work like comic opera the word is at least as important as the music. And this fact—not the fact of the insularity of the subject matter—is what I fear will always prevent most of these operas we are talking about from getting on to foreign stages in those blessed countries where opera plays the part that golf and other games do in England ; that is to say is part of the necessities of life. To translate Gilbert and Sullivan, except of course *The Mikado*, is impossible, and I deeply regret it ; for my view of their unique significance is precisely that expressed a few years ago in a lecture at the Royal Institution by one of your Vice Presidents, Major Maurice Baring. I think that, by way of concluding this oration, I cannot do better than quote his exact words.

He tells us how a few years ago, during the first revival at the Prince's Theatre, he was sitting next a celebrated modern author whom he describes as an "extremely accomplished manipulator of words." The piece was *Iolanthe*, and when the chorus sang :

"To say she is his mother is a bit of arrant folly

O fie ! Strephon is a rogue !

Perhaps his brain is addled and it's very melancholy,

—Taradiddle, taradiddle, tol-lol-lay !"

his companion remarked, "That's what I call poetry !", adding that in his opinion the most enduring and permanent achievement of the Victorian age will turn out to be neither that of Tennyson, Browning, and Swinburne, nor of Gladstone, Disraeli, and Parnell, nor of Darwin, Huxley, and Ball, but the operas of Gilbert and Sullivan !

Major Baring goes on to say that possibly a remote posterity will confuse fact with fiction ; children of the future may think that in that amusing age Trials by Jury were conducted to music ; that pirates and policemen hobnobbed at Penzance ; that Strephon the Arcadian Shepherd brought about the Reform of the House of Lords ; that the Bolshevik Revolution took place in Barataria, and the Suffragist movement at Castle Adamant !

This I think is a delightful surmise of Major Baring's. And when, completing the forecast of his author-companion, he remarks that it would not surprise him, if, in centuries to come, people were to talk of the Gilbert and Sullivan age as we of to-day talk of the age of Pericles, I can only assure you this is precisely how I myself feel about the brace of geniuses in whose honour your Society was formed. Hence it is no peroratory firework (that's a good word, "peroratory" !) when I tell you, that not only has addressing you on a subject so very near my heart been a great pleasure, but that I look upon your invitation to do so as a very great compliment.

NOTE.—Since above has gone to Press I have heard *Iolanthe* at the Savoy and am delighted to report reasonable *tempi* and only two encores. Since Headquarters has set the example, one hopes that provincial Dramatic Societies (mostly amateur but excellent) where these abuses still rage, will follow suit.—E.S.

FRANCIS THOMPSON

By E. G. TWITCHETT

NO literary paradox of them all is enunciated more often than the one about how dangerous it is to know too much of authors ; poets particularly, and, most particularly, one's favourite poets. Their physical presence, if long continued, kills. The angry creatures, inextricably entangled somehow in themselves, are basilisks to their admirers. It is ill, it seems, even to read about them. While they live, wise men are urgently recommended to shun meeting them ; if they are dead (as of course they customarily are), wise men are to reflect that all help, all profit and all delight might be lost, and that little at the best, save curiosity, can be satisfied by reading too minutely in their biographies. The counsel has even gone round among the wisest that their critics are best avoided. This addition, however, appears to be redundant to the rule. For readers of such degree of wisdom have long ago ceased to read at all.

Even a literary paradox cannot always be wholly false, and this one has a great deal to be said for it. In some of the very greatest of poets the poetry is not to be detected, or even inferred, from the speech, or by the features, or on the surface of the life. The life itself quite commonly appears as a revulsion from the poetry ; as a holiday from the pangs of parturition—as sometimes, unhappily, even a sort of saturnalia. *The Ring and the Book* will not always communicate again quite the old steady thrill, when once one has followed with the mind's eye the white-gloved Browning calling and calling in Mayfair. There are many moods in which Tennyson's eccentric pomposities and exclusive gestures, delightfully, even delicately, barbarous though they have been made to appear by the polish of a thousand artful raconteurs, smudge a little even his most perfect halcyon moments. And how the fire sinks in Atalanta at the recollection of the primly-wooded slopes of Putney Hill, and the daily adoration of the pram !

It is among the duller lives, curiously enough, that the paradox will be discovered to break down. The story of Byron is infinitely more exciting, but reveals infinitely less about the nature of satire, than the story of Heine. Shelley's adventures are rarely comforting to the meditative mind, in spite of the glittering elfin weather which holds them becalmed ; but how entirely relevant is Wordsworth's early peccadillo. Pontificals apart, the biography of Coleridge is a hundred times more valuable than the so much busier biography of Meredith ; and that of Verlaine than that of Villon, even allowing for the vagabondage.

The poet is for ever young. Nevertheless, to borrow a generalisation of Mr. De La Mare's, some poets are manifestly younger than others. Some, the rarest although not often the greatest, retain the naiveté of children, staying throughout life wrapped in fantasies, grave, interfused with a serene, insensuous passion, happily defending their innocence of heart

against "the dirty devices of the world." Others, the greater part, stay boys, intellectually curious, with bolder movements, consenting to the existence of the visible world although often ranging over it in discontent. Among these are the world-poets; but deeds and questings, be they never so world-wide, have little bearing upon poetry, which action may initiate but never can control. Long after the boy's brightest ventures are forgotten one still finds chapter and verse for the radiant trivialities of the child.

Such is the poet dedicate. All that he does is of the stuff of poetry. A golden mist of the Muses, like the shreds of a nebula, hangs over his neighbourhood; and to approach him is to share its effulgence. His life and his work are not to be distinguished apart. It is the poet that begets the man in him, and not the man that begets the poet.

That Francis Thompson is among these poets dedicate is not to be denied. He knew the fact himself, and flaunted it. "There is a sense in which I have always been, and even now remain a child," he says, and, of course, "Look for me in the nurseries of Heaven." The famous essay on Shelley contains the full-length evocation of a poet, one of the rarest feats in prose; but it is the figure of Francis Thompson that appears and not the desired revenant, that earnest revolutionary spirit with its chemistry, its athletics and occult sciences, its propaganda for Godwin and its toiling over the face of Europe:

He is still at play, save only that his play is such as mankind stops to watch, and his playthings are those which the gods give their children. The universe is his box of toys. He dabbles his fingers in the day-fall. He is gold-dusty with tumbling amidst the stars. He makes bright mischief with the moon. The meteors nuzzle their noses in his hand. He teases into growling the kennelled thunder, and laughs at the shaking of its fiery chain. He dances in and out of the gates of heaven: its floor is littered with his broken fancies. He runs wild over the fields of ether. He chases the rolling world. He gets between the feet of the horses of the sun.

That is the poet of *The Anthem of Earth*, even to the archness. The play-boxes of Shelley, in sober earnest, were Political Economy, Love and Theology—very much more grown-up matters than all this vague richness of the generalised universe; and behind the heavenly press of his poetry, the most nervous, energetic and oracular in the world, there waits in grim reserve all the wisdom of the ages.

The bare events of the life of Thompson speak precisely, if not as eloquently, to this picture—such few of them as abstraction and opium permitted to occur. He was born in 1859, the son of an overworked doctor, at Preston in Lancashire. Apart from one poetasting uncle, no significant ancestor has been found. He received a sound education at Ushaw, the Roman Catholic college, where he shone as a prize-boy, a little bullied. He was intended for the priesthood but after some heart-burnings the idea was given up. In 1877 he was packed off to Manchester to learn to be a doctor. He endured so far as to assist at dissections with calm, to which fact we owe some of his best imagery. One microcosm already was in his box of toys.

The public libraries, however, and the cricket at Old Trafford detained him longer than his anatomical studies ; and it was probably then that he began to savour the gorgeous possibilities of opium, for Manchester was notorious for the opium-eating of its cotton-spinners. He failed in his examinations, and vague years ensued. In 1885, after trying to enlist for a soldier, he suddenly left for London with volumes of Blake and Aeschylus in his pockets, and little else save his fare. Still darker years follow, full of the standing by horses, the anticipative opening of doors, the general hanging-round and touting, the retailing of small necessities, the boot-blackening, and all the thousand and one little side-lines of the Thames Embankment.

The rest has become a literary legend ; how, early in 1887, after three years of this life, he sent a few poems and a scholarly essay on Paganism to *Merry England* ; how he was lost ; how he was found and enticed to the editorial offices, nearly a year later, after he had abandoned all hope. How the editor, Wilfrid Meynell, and his wife Alice, gradually contrived to lure him from his calling of cabs. How he was set up in lodgings with his mind cleared of opium, and how for ten years the poetry came pouring out. It is not so generally remembered that for many years before his death in 1907 he had written only prose. That was one of the revenges of opium.

It comes to the pen as a matter of instinct to deplore those wasted years ; and yet it seems that they were necessary to the Francis Thompson we know. In the lives of all the poets of this dedicated sort, unless money or great good fortune divert them, there is that period, sometimes lifelong, in which the world takes smooth advantage of their innocence of heart. Sometimes they are oblivious of all attempts to interrupt their preparatory play, which they gravely resume after the onsets. These are the poets that matter, who intend to set their poetry down. It seems not improbable that certain others, imperfectly dedicated, emerge from persecution, respectable, a little suspect, and never quite oblivious, into the decent lower reaches of humanity, and accommodate themselves to Yo-Yo and the wireless, or whatever it may be.

Francis Thompson could not be moved from his destiny, or interrupted in his preparations. A great playwright of our time has told, in the preface to a play, how the dedicated artist will throw not only his wife, his mother and his child to the dogs, but himself also, so that his right hand may stay for a little above the conflict. That is another paradox which seems to break down in some cases. The aphorist himself, for example, has not only been at all times a model relative, but has invented the most unlikely precautions for bodily survival, as by eschewing animal foods and the inspiring but enervating play of medicated weeds and ferments. Our poet dedicate conforms, however. Wife and child he does not usually acquire ; but he will take no precautions for his body, knowing of none. He will permit himself to be devoured by wolves or stock-jobbers, or any creature ravenous enough to stoop to his carcase, rather than break his inner rhythm by rousing to seek shelter. One does not find him often to leeward. Diurnal

labours will not successfully engage him. There have been efficient poets in the Civil Service, but never one of this kind.

Infernal though those years appear, they were quiet and full : one views a very great deal of the universe from Thames-side. Indeed, infernal is hardly the word. Rather they would appear to have been a fantastical purgatory, a sort of tortured seeding-time, a sowing of poppies and mandrakes. That we should so organise our civilisation as to allow any man of sensibility, by reason of his sensibility, to endure humiliation so long continued is deplorable enough. Yet perhaps we may take comfort from the dedicated poets. It is from humiliation that we grow the flower humility—and so we grew the loveliest of humility's blossoms, *The Hound of Heaven*.

No evidence exists that Francis Thompson had composed poetry of any great merit before his rescue. Such evidence as there is points all the other way. At the time he sent his choice selections to Mr. Meynell, he was already in his twenty-ninth year, a great age for a poet. Of the batch he chose, only two poems were thought to be worth printing. One was *The Passion of Mary*, a pleasant little poem, with some pretty play with pronouns and a conceit which just falls short of its high human purpose. The other was *Dream Tryst*, a more finished affair with echoes of Rossetti, Poe, and Coleridge, but few of the Thompson to be :

The chambers in the house of Dreams
Are fed with so divine an air,
That Time's hoar wings grow young therein,
And they who walk there are most fair.
I joyed for me, I joyed for her,
Who with the Past meet girt about :
Where our last kiss still warms the air,
Nor can her eyes go out.

There is just a trace of the metaphors we know in that. But it is mawkish stuff for a poet of nearly thirty. The Muses had laid their bait with economy.

Within a few months had begun one of the greatest floods of metaphor in the language. At least, " flood " is the accepted symbol ; but the surge in these metaphors is not strictly progressive. They separate before they advance. Mr. R. L. Mégroz has summed up the progress of the average poem of Thompson as " rather like a river in spate when it becomes rhetorical and magniloquent." I should have preferred a less dynamic image ; for my part, I am reminded rather of a waving of curtains, magnificently embroidered, along a spacious, ill-lit corridor, in an uncertain wind. This, for example, is the sort of thing, more disjunctive than Shakespeare at his uneasiest, but such as hardly anybody else would have addressed to the revolving earth since him :

It is long
Since time was first a fledgling ;
Yet thou may'st be but as a pendant bulla
Against his stripling bosom swung. Alack !

For that we seem indeed
 To have slipped the world's great leaping-time, and come
 Upon thy pinched and dozing days : these weeds,
 These corporal leavings, thou not cast'st us new,
 Fresh from thy craftship, like the lilies' coat,
 But foist'st us off
 With hasty tarnished piercings negligent,
 Snippets and waste
 From old ancestral wearings,
 That have seen sorrier usage ; remainder-flesh
 After our father's surfeits ; nay, with chinks,
 Some of us, that, if speech may have free leave
 Our souls go out at elbows. We are sad
 With more than our sires' heaviness, and with
 More than their weakness weak ; we shall not be
 Mighty with all their mightiness, nor shall not
 Rejoice with all their joy. Ay, Mother ! Mother !

That lacks somewhat in melody ; but it may be taken nevertheless as typical of the poet in full swing, with its static beauty, its discrete images, each with the ring of phrases or words fresh from the anvil ; and its somewhat unoriginal content. His themes are rarely new. But his metaphors have the bright, gladdening look of coins fresh from the mint. Or, at least, where he has space for their making ; for his famous verbal coinages, pocket-metaphors though they are in a way, are difficult for anybody with a verbal palate to swallow entire : " sciential," " coerule," " supportlessly."

His music is irregular, though good at its best. His philosophy is as conventional as any other unorthodox Roman Catholic's. His ultimate content, the skeleton upon which those lovely coverings are draped, is usually some scene from the London streets, or one of the common counters of poetry. His emotions range from a barely tolerable archness to a self-pity which is like Mankind pitying itself and a humility somewhat too earth-bound and loving for true saintliness. Passion he exhibits only in one poem ; in the rest it is completely transmuted into an insensuous gorgeousness. But, if not in the manipulation, at least in the invention, of metaphor, he is one of the great masters. Even the insidious archness is sometimes so decorated as almost to ring true :

Under thy ruined passions, fallen and sere,
 The wild dreams stir, like little radiant girls
 Whom in the moulted plumage of the year
 Their comrades sweet have buried to the curls.

Life, as is its way with his kind, presented itself to him disguised as a shower of metaphors. I can recall only two passages in the verse in which Life may be said to have got through raw :

A dead fly in a dusty window crack.

and

O God ! Thou knowest if this heart of flesh
 Quivers like broken entrails, when the wheel
 Rolleth some dog in Middle street, or fresh
 Fruit when you tear it bleeding from the peel.

Both are very unsatisfactory and very significant.

In all the descriptions one has of Francis Thompson he appears as a man drowning in Reality :

It was easily perceived that he was not candidly and fully himself in common conversation. He was as much shut within his repetitions as the last little Chinese box is shut within a series of Chinese boxes. Lift all the lids and you will find emptiness in the last. Francis insisted on your putting all the little boxes back again, fitting the right lid on each, for, having made his point, he seldom failed to prove it backwards.

That is Everard Meynell, speaking in his own person in his invaluable memoir. This is Mr. Wilfred Whitten's picture, among the best that we have of any poet of the dedicated sort, and a penetrating piece of criticism :

On great subjects he was slow or silent ; on trifles he became grotesquely tedious. This dreamer seemed to be surprised into a kind of exhilaration at finding himself in contact with small realities.

The revelling in the bitter, boisterous element, in fact ; the stinging of the salt world-breezes :

And then the fountains of memory would be broken up, or some quaint corner of his *amour propre* would be touched. He would explain nine times what was clear, and talk about snuff or indigestion or the posting of a letter until the room swam round us.

There has been more than the usual amount of learned excitement over all this innocence and metaphor. Psychologists, ever to vanward, have renewed their golden prime in the vagaries of his woman-worship, his defiant preoccupation with chastity, and his favourite images—the key, the scarlet, the flying from the chase. Medical men have looked in and prescribed. Priests have denounced or absolved. Mr. R. L. Mégroz, in an interesting study with wide perspectives, perhaps a little too full of mirages from Arabia and Castile, has assigned him peers and precursors from all quarters and ages. Professors have been at work. There is said to exist a concordance of his writings (what a neo-English Dictionary, a very monument of non-Basic that must be !). The French have actually excelled the Germans in eagerness of commentary and translation. And yet there is surprisingly little agreement about what is really concealed behind all those magnificent successive tapestries. Is it one of the world's visionaries ; or one of its saints ; or merely one of its supreme workers in tapestry ?

None of [the Victorians] were able to understand Francis Thompson ; his sky-scraping humility, his mountains of mystical detail, his occasional and unashamed weakness, his sudden and sacred blasphemies.

That way inclines the usual view, here expressed in the irreplaceable words of Mr. G. K. Chesterton, hovering uncertainly between the value of the mysticism and the influence of the saintliness. I am not convinced that this view will continue to be taken. That some of the poems of Thompson will live so long as Poetry, is hardly to be questioned, at least as Poetry is at present constituted ; but will they be more than a mere handful ? And will he be placed ever again in a higher class than among the great craftsmen who have written one great poem ? The true visionary, the seer, is dynamic and unhampered :

I saw Eternity the other night.

is the way he begins what he has to say. The saint, on the other hand, is distinguished by virtues more pugnacious than innate passivity. High passion, by a miracle, brought *The Hound of Heaven* to birth ; and in its shapeliness, its full perfection of matter, and its completeness of utterance there would seem to be no place for decay to settle. *The Daisy* and *The Poppy*, poignant in their fumbling for the earthiness denied, may live for their poignancy. As for the rest of the poems I do not think that their supremacy in metaphor will carry them very many stages further down the years, except it be in the minds of fellow-poets and devout co-religionists.

The great bulk of his poetry is about his poetry—that is, you might read his three volumes and think they were but prefaces to thirty-three. Really they are the index not to forty-eight other volumes but to the forty-eight years of the poet's existence—to the Poet, that is.

That, from the pen of his biographer, seems unconsciously to say the last word. Neither *The Anthems of Earth* nor *Sister Songs* is quite sufficient in itself. I do not feel that there is another poem, even any of the odes, in which insufficiency has not left some fatal blemish. Even genius cannot resist the operation of eternal law. To glow is not enough. It is necessary to take fire. Emotion alone will not endure, however intensely experienced and urgently communicated ; it is passion only that may attain to live for ever in this world. God, perhaps, orders it otherwise in His Abodes.



THE WOOD

Woodcut by ELINOR LAMBERT

CORRESPONDENCE

PARSON WOODFORDE

(To the Editor of THE LONDON MERCURY)

SIR,—I am taken to task by Sir F. D. MacKinnon in his very pleasant essay on *Parson Woodforde* for being, what he evidently conceives me to be, an inadequate editor. His own method of editing Woodforde is then revealed. We should have been told, for instance, what "shram" meant, and "stiony," though both words are explained with the utmost clarity in the context. I am compared with Lord Braybrooke, "the pompous peer," and so on. Well! there is no pleasing everyone, and as my editorial method was deliberately adopted, and explained in the prefaces, this is not the place to discuss it further.

The truth is, that in this matter of editing a Woodforde one has to steer, as best one can, a middle course between pompous peers and pedantic knights. I tried to edit the Diary for the plain man. And the method has some advantages for the MacKinnon alternative is sometimes dangerous. While, for instance, we are explaining what is apparent (as in the case of "Jericho") one's memory becomes so befogged with irrelevant details that one forgets—or fails to observe—who Betsy Davy married, which is much more important and amusing. Yours, etc.,

86, Lansdowne Road, W.II.

JOHN BERESFORD

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES & NEWS

Correspondence from readers on all subjects of bibliographical interest is invited. Our Correspondent will, to the best of his ability, answer all queries addressed to him.

ITEMS FROM THE BOOKSHOPS AND CATALOGUES

ABOUT once a year these notes are devoted entirely to the booksellers' catalogues, which so often receive, I fear, less than their due in these pages and are summarily dismissed in the last inch or two of my space. Since, however, as I write, the book-auction season has not yet begun (save for the sale, by Messrs. Knight, Frank and Rutley, on September 30th, of some books from the library of the late Edgar Wallace—including *The Three Just Men* in Czech and numerous other translations of Wallace's novels), and since the autumn publishing season is yet young, now seems the appropriate moment for a solid three-page orgy of catalogues. Let us begin with the famous house of Quaritch, which has just sent me a copy of its catalogue (number 463) of books relating to Palaeography and Bibliography. This is a very important list, containing nearly two thousand items, and a great deal of valuable information is given in Messrs. Quaritch's notes. The last few pages are given up to the publications of the Roxburghe Club, of which 195 are offered, including one which is in preparation. As a complete list of the Club's publications is not easily available, Messrs. Quaritch add a list of the 187 works, issued by it, which are not offered in this catalogue. This is a most useful feature. A notable volume which catches my eye as I turn the pages is a copy of the *Cologne Chronicle*, folio 1499, which is priced £135. A long note is given on this book, which contains "the first plain public declaration made in Germany, by a Printer," that Gutenberg was the inventor of printing, and the statement was made to refute claims put forward for Nicolas Jenson. Another important item—though it is not a book—is a joint autograph letter from Coleridge and Wordsworth to Messrs. Longman and Rees, the publishers. It was written in 1801 and alludes both to the finances of the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads*, and to a proposed illustrated edition of *Christabel*. Actually *Christabel* was not published until 1816—fifteen years later. Messrs. Quaritch are asking £150 for this letter.

TO catalogue 48, just published by Messrs. Elkin Mathews, of 33 Conduit Street, London, W.1., is prefixed an introduction from the pen of Mr. John Carter, whose book on nineteenth-century binding variants was reviewed not long ago in these notes. Mr. Carter begins by remarking that "There are a number of collectors, and probably a proportionately higher number of booksellers, who regard bibliography as a cursed nuisance," but he concludes that the collector "must learn the rudiments of bibliography, since without it intelligent collecting is impossible." That is a truth that cannot be stated too often, for even to-day there are many people who ignore it entirely. So much, indeed, is the bibliographical side of collecting neglected, that it is still possible to publish books, intended as guides for the collector, in which the elements of bibliography are not so much as mentioned. Messrs. Mathews's catalogue is divided into three sections, books of the eighteenth century or earlier, books of the nineteenth century, and modern first editions. In the first section I notice a copy of that celebrated book of parodies, Isaac Hawkins Browne's *A Pipe of Tobacco*, first edition, 8vo., 1736, price £6 10s. A first edition of Sheridan's *The Rivals* 8vo., 1775, is to be had for £18—surely not an exaggerated price to set on so famous

a play, which is far from common in its original edition. The three-volume collected edition of Shenstone's *Works*, 8vo., 1764-69, is marked £3 5s. In the nineteenth-century section are several first editions of Byron, at one end, and at the other a couple of Fergus Hume's. The latter do not include *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*, a work of which the first edition has, I believe, so far eluded even the keenest scented blood-hounds of the novel-collecting world—and there is no more persistent sleuth in existence than your novel-collector on the track of a missing first edition by a popular writer. In the modern section it is pleasant to see space given up to many good authors—Mr. Belloc and Mr. Birrell are examples—who have never been collected with the assiduity they have deserved. Of Mr. Birrell's first editions seven are here offered at prices ranging from five shillings to fourteen. The catalogue concludes with "Three Books of Underestimated Importance." These are Edward Gibbon's *Miscellaneous Works*, 2 volumes, quarto, 1796, £3; Dr. John Brown's *Horae Subsecivae* 3 series, 8vo., 1858, 1861 and 1882, £2 5s.; and W. N. P. Barbellion's *The Journal of a Disappointed Man*, 8vo., 1919, £2 10s. May I suggest to Messrs. Mathews another under-estimated book, for use on a future occasion? It is the late A. B. Walkley's *Pastiche and Prejudice*, 1921, one of the most amusing books of reprinted journalistic essays I know.

MR. BERNARD HALLIDAY, of 1 King Richard's Road, Leicester, is one of those booksellers who have the pleasant habit of diversifying their book-catalogues by the occasional introduction of an interesting old drawing or two. His latest list—number 154—is no exception, for he includes in it seven original water-colour portrait drawings by Rober Dighton, dating from between 1800 and 1814. They measure about 11 by 9 inches each, and are offered at prices ranging from fifteen shillings to a guinea—an attractive offer, if the drawings are favourable examples of Dighton's work. Among the books in this list is a specially interesting copy of the *Εκων Βασιλική*, 8vo., 1648, with a presentation inscription from Thomas Morton, Bishop of Durham, who was a personal friend of King Charles I. On the back of the last leaf of this book Morton has written an account of what the King said to the Bishop of London immediately before Charles's death. For this book £35 is asked. I notice, too, in this list a copy, price three guineas, of Isaac Watts's *The Psalms of David imitated in the Language of the New Testament*, 12mo., 1719. This is a book which deserves to be in every representative collection of English poetry, since it contains what is, I believe, the first appearance of the most famous of all English hymns, "Our God, our help in ages past"—as the first line originally ran. In my experience the book is by no means common.

LIST number 278, issued by Messrs. Pickering and Chatto, of 1 King Street, St. James', London, S.W.1, differs from most of this firm's catalogues, not in subject (for it deals with English Prose, Poetry and Plays from the 17th to 19th centuries), but in that the stress is laid on minor books and on later editions of famous ones. Take for example, Edmund Waller. He is represented here by no first edition, but there are copies of all editions of his *Poems* from the fourth, 1668, to the tenth, 1722. Most of these editions of Waller are priced only in shillings—though a large paper copy of the eighth edition, 1711, costs £2 10s., and a copy of the ninth edition, bound by Roger Payne, £2 2s. Indeed, the great majority of the thirteen hundred and more items in this list are priced in shillings, some being marked as low as two shillings—so that a great many interesting books may be acquired from it for a small outlay. It may be noted that some hundred and fifty books and pamphlets are included under

the heading "Theatrical." Many of these must, I imagine, be extremely uncommon, and this list therefore offers exceptional opportunities to the collector who specialises in theatrical history.

MR. P. M. BARNARD'S catalogues are always well produced and scholarly, and his latest, number 177, is no exception. It opens with a section of bibliographical books, after which a number of rare books, English and foreign, are listed. A special feature is made of books by Robert Boyle, including a first issue of *Essays of the Strange Subtlety, Great Efficacy, Determinate Nature, of Effluvioms*, 8vo., 1673, £7; and first editions of *Occasional Reflections upon several Subjects*, 8vo., 1665, £5 5s., and of *Tracts, consisting of Observations about the Saltness of the Sea*, etc., 8vo., 1674, £5. Mr. Barnard's place of business is at 17 Church Road, Tunbridge Wells.

A CATALOGUE of first Editions and Autographs of Modern Authors (number 24) comes from Mr. Bertram Rota, of 76a Davies Street, London, W.1. I note that you can get the original, undated edition of one of the best modern detective stories, Mr. E. C. Bentley's *Trent's Last Case*, for twelve shillings. Mr. Roy Campbell's poem, *The Flaming Terrapin*, 1924, a "fine copy in dust-wrapper", is priced £2 10s., and the same sum is asked for a "fine copy" of Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*, 1885. £3 is the price of Mr. Ralph Hodgson's *The Last Blackbird*, 1907 (his first book of poems, I think); and you can have the late E. W. Hornung's admirable "Raffles" book, *The Amateur Cracksman*, 1899, for only ten shillings. Matthew Arnold's *Essays in Criticism*, 1865, (to mention one rather older book) is marked twenty-five shillings. It is described as a nice copy—and the book is not one which it is very easy to discover in really good condition, or so, at least, I have found.

IN catalogue number 9, of Mr. Leonard Hyman, of Cromwell House, Fulwood Place, High Holborn, London, W.C.1., I see a somewhat uncommon privately printed eighteenth-century book, the *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse*, 1741, of Thomas Catesby Paget, Baron Paget (1689-1742). He is chiefly remembered for some neat verses called *The Character of Almenon*," which begin

Almenon had a sort of merit :
Some sense, good humour, wit and spirit ;
But then he had a strange weak side—
He hated roguery and pride,
Nor saw at Courts, without a sneer,
The mummeries he met with there.

Mr. Hyman asks fifteen shillings for this book—which I have several times seen priced higher than that.

MY final paragraph, last month, was added after my notes were already in proof. This, combined with my indifferent calligraphy, brought into existence somewhat surprising mention of "The Mating on the Bounty"—which sounds like a reference to those persons who are alleged to get married on the dole. But—alas ! for Hymen—the word should have been Mutiny.

I. A. WILLIAMS

BOOK-PRODUCTION NOTES

ERHARD RATDOLT*

ERHARD RATDOLT has a claim on the interest of those concerned with book-production, and especially with its practical side, which is equalled by none of his Italian contemporaries and by no one but Gutenberg himself amongst the Germans. The printer must always be ready to borrow anything handy from outside his own craft, if he is to keep it alive and save it from the degeneration to which a repetitive art like printing is especially liable. That is what Ratdolt did when he hurried from Augsburg to Venice about the year 1475. Instead of imposing German ways upon Italian printing he helped himself to whatever the Italian calligraphers, engravers and illuminators had to give him, and grafted it upon his work of printing. Italian penmanship gave him a fount of roman type which some hold to be better even than Jenson's. The strapwork which is characteristic of the Italian illumination of his day suggested the intricate and elaborate patterns of white scrollwork on a black ground by which we at once recognize Ratdolt's borders. He adapted the work of the illuminator to the printing of books as Gutenberg and Jenson before him had adapted that of the calligrapher. As Dr. Diehl reminds us in his monograph, Ratdolt's books in their turn were a source of inspiration to William Morris, for they showed him the kind of beauty which appropriate decoration may impart to printed pages. Ratdolt was an innovator in other ways also, as in his use of wood-blocks in colour printing and in the invention of the title-page. He was also the first to print in gold. In the British Museum there is a vellum copy of his Euclid of 1482 with a dedicatory letter to the Doge of Venice printed entirely in gold.

This new monograph will not supplant Redgrave's account of Ratdolt, printed for the Bibliographical Society in 1894 and 1899; but it supplements it in important details. Redgrave gives us reproductions of types, borders and initial letters in black and white and colour in the full size of the originals, including the specimen sheet, which is the earliest type specimen known. Diehl gives us all these and many more besides in a size reduced to fit his smaller page. He gives us also specimen pages of the books printed by Ratdolt at Augsburg on his return from Venice: these are not found in Redgrave. They show how Italy repaid some of the debt which she owed to the German printers who first brought the printing press to her cities. In a little pamphlet which accompanies the monograph, Herr Reichner has printed the text of Ratdolt's own autobiographical notes jotted down on three fly-leaves, taken apparently from a copy of one of his famous calendars; for a fourth leaf contains a movable diagram of the stars. These were unknown to Redgrave, and fix the year year of Ratdolt's birth in or near 1447. The little inset is itself a beautiful specimen of Rudolf Koch's "Jessen-Schrift," a clear and lovely gothic letter.

THE WHIRLIGIG OF *THE TIMES*

MAY I add a note of congratulation, tempered with gentle criticism, to the chorus of approval which has greeted *The Times* on its complete change of face? The new type is, of course, a hark-back with very considerable and carefully studied modifications to the "old-faced" type in which the first number was "printed logographically" on January 1st, 1785, under its original name of *The Daily*

*Erhard Ratdolt. *Ein Meisterdrucker des XV und XVI Jahrhunderts.* Von Dr. Robert Diehl. 8vo. Herbert Reichner, 6 Strohmayergasse, Vienna VI. 10s. 6d.

Universal Register. The title *The Times* was prefixed three years later. And that old-faced type of 1785 and 1788 was the lawful and direct descendant of the roman type which in the fifteenth century the brothers Windelin and John of Speyer and Jenson and Ratdolt took from the humanistic script favoured by scribes and scholars of the Renaissance—itself a hark-back to the developed carolingian hand of some three centuries earlier.

To the humanistic strain the new *Times* type owes its warm, sympathetic, open face, and much of that relative clearness which, as many *Times* readers have testified, make it pleasant for weak eyes. In the eighteenth century *The Times* followed typographical fashion instead of making it, and so, in 1799, it came to be printed in the “modern” type, which with modifications remained in use until a month ago. It was William Morris who contrasted “the ugly and vulgar illegibility of the modern type” with the “elegance and legibility of the ancient.” He is alluding especially to the substitution of “ranging” arabic figures, 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9, for “non-ranging”—1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9; and some will share my regret that “ranging” figures have been adopted for the new fount. The alphabetical letters of the fount are perhaps as legible as letters can be made in the sizes used for printing newspapers; but to get legibility with the greatest saving of space it has been judged necessary to make the descenders of g, j, p, q, and y even shorter than they are in the modern fount which has been supplanted. The ascending letters have likewise been shortened. The type would have been more readable as well as more beautiful if the traditional proportions had been kept; but then fewer lines would have gone to the column, and readers would have had less to read. So much research and experiment and ophthalmological science have gone to the designing of the type that it is perhaps rash to suggest that it would be even more readable if the thin strokes had been made a little less fine, approximating more to the thick strokes. The disparity between the thick and thin strokes is especially great in the heavy letter used for the news-headings; and chiefly for that reason the display type seems less pleasing than the roman letter of the text. It recalls two different type-faces which also sinned by having the thin strokes too thin compared with the thick. Both the De Vinne series, designed in America, and the Plantin, cut by Messrs. Shanks & Co., enjoyed a wide vogue when they were introduced three or four decades ago, and both have since passed to the limbo of bygone fashions. The *Times* display type pleases me even less in its condensed form. It is a matter of practical convenience to be able to use a condensed letter at a pinch for setting a heading over-long for its measure; but the letters can be condensed only at the sacrifice of their good proportions. If the conditions of production allowed it, one would like to see the capital letters in which all the headings are set varied occasionally by the use of minuscules. There would be a gain in clearness; for lines printed with lower case letters are much easier to read than lines of level capitals.

Some critics have written to deplore the banishment from *The Times* of its familiar heading in “mock-Gothic.” The regret, although founded on sentiment and on the affection which springs from long use, is not for that reason to be brushed aside. The revived eighteenth-century heading is pleasantly robust and contrasts favourably with the highly manicured letters (I am indebted for the description to a correspondent who is himself a distinguished calligrapher) which are used just beneath them in the heading of *The Times Literary Supplement* and also on *The Times* picture page. Sentiment of another kind perhaps accounts for the restoration of the arms of George III to the place hitherto held by those of the present Royal Family; for, even apart from what seems an anachronism in their use in *The Times* of to-day, the restored design is not a good piece of decorative heraldry.

B. H. NEWDIGATE

CHRONICLES

THE TALKIES

IGLOO. Scott. Universal. Empire.

EN NATT. Molander. Svenska. Academy.

DER HAUPTMANN VON KOEPENICK. Oswald. International Distributors.
Cambridge.

MOVIE CRAZY. Bruckman. Paramount. Carlton.

GRAND HOTEL. Goulding. M-G-M. Palace.

MEN OF TO-MORROW. Sagan. Paramount (British). Plaza.

FEW things could more clearly show the difference between Hollywood and any place where sanity is not regarded as dangerous than *Igloo* and *En Natt*. The former, a film of the Eskimos, would have become an Arctic saga had a Swede made it; the latter, produced in California, would have lost all that makes it fine and moving and become just another brother-love story. *Igloo* deals with a tribe living under Eskimo tabus, the greatest of which is that the old must be sealed up in their snow-huts when the tribe moves on, lest they hamper the strong. The tabu is broken and subsequent disasters are meant to show the displeasure of the gods. But the disasters were so obviously leapt at by Hollywood as dramatic high-lights and the feelings of the Eskimos themselves had to be explained by a breezy commentary, so that no overwhelming impression was made. Wind swept the snow into rich gradations of white and grey, and feathered sealskin hoods lyrically. But that does not make a film, and the photographing of the most impassive-faced race in the world does not make acting, despite the overworked theory of "types." There was a moment of harsh tragedy in the unearthing of a baby's snow-grave by starved huskies; there is, and always will be, beauty (in the rare full sense of the word) in Arctic wastes, so inappropriately named, and in ice-bears and in the heaving of a whale . . . but with that whale reality left *Igloo*, and when the avalanche came, the crashing of bergs looked like nothing so much as the mechanical propulsion of magnified paraffin-blocks.

But *En Natt*, not so deliberately Northern, was Nordic through and through, with no compromise. The life in this first Swedish talkie to come to London is frustrated, misguided—but, for that reason, life as we know and must know it. Molander is not a first-rank director, and faced with the delight of a Swedish film again, it is easier to contemplate than to criticise. But, without sentiment, the fact remains that with the coming of Sweden to our talking screen, there returns so much that has been missed, that particular portion of all that is abiding which the cinema can so well reveal. The film opens with a voice singing, and a camera moving from stream, waterwheel, stable, to a room in a mill. Our eyes dwell on rough wood of wheels, turning as regularly as time, on hangings whose every woof is felt, on furniture in which love is still living, and while the eye dwells, the mind greets the old Swedish gift of seeing in the camera an instrument with which to get through to the ultimate life of which all things are part. The voice heard singing is that of a Russian mill-girl with whom one of two well-to-do brothers is in love. For this he is disowned by his mother, and, for that, joins the Bolsheviks. Captured by troops one presumes to be Finnish, among whom is his brother, he is sentenced to be shot at seven next morning.

Wilhelm, the loyalist, is in authority over him, but lets him out on parole for the "one night" to visit their mother. But hearing her still railing against him, Armas turns back from his home and goes to the mill. The girl half-discovers his secret and promptly as well as practically, locks him in so that he shall not go. Armas, threatening her with his revolver, breaks out and gallops back to be shot. On the way he is fired at by Reds, misled by the loyalist greatcoat he is wearing. Wilhelm waits. The firing squad is lined up. At the last minute, Armas arrives, wounded, to die at the feet of the firing squad marshalled to shoot him, and to keep his word to his brother. So the fates are appeased—to whose gain I, for one, cannot say. The keeping of a word that benefited nobody and hurt several seemed to me selfish and misplaced gallantry. But it is to be respected, because behind it there is conscience, culture as we know it in Europe, a knowledge of what life demands from the living and an assurance in the rightness of one's own actions which only comes from being at one with one's belief. These are things worth having, and, more importantly, worth knowing that others possess.

The film, with the exception of the mill-girl, is beautifully acted. Gerda Lundquist, of *Gosta Berling*, is again implacable as a mother; Bjorn Berglund is good as Armas and Uno Henning, of *Jeanne Ney*, is better as Wilhelm. Ake Dahlquist's camera-work has feeling for light and landscape, and these and the relentlessness of spirit make *En Natt* take its place in Swedish cinema. Whether it will carry it on, I do not know. The language is not microphonic, which may prejudice some. C. A. Lejeune who has written the best appreciation of Swedish films in *Cinema*, thinks that they can have "little meaning for the urgency of to-day." But to-days have a habit of passing, and there has been a tendency of late to make the world seem considerably more urgent than it ever can be to the majority of people. I should not be surprised if many, left cold by the superficial business of movies in the main, turn to the one section of cinema where permanent things are a matter of everyday concern.

It seems to me that *En Natt*, doing this to some degree, and *Der Hauptmann von Koepenick*, refusing to be a tragedy, are the real modern movies to be considered if the cinema is to hold its place in the contemporary pattern. In the German film, the old man, released after spending most of his life in prison, could easily have been a little Lear. His identity papers were out of date; he could get none without work, and no work without papers. So, burgling a police station to get some, and of course being caught, he spent his next ten years in prison studying military text-books, with the result that on his release again, he was able to pass himself off as an officer, commandeer troops, march to a small town and seize the town hall. He had spirit; we sat up; we watched him buying a captain's greatcoat at a pawnbroker's, we saw him being saluted till it dawned on him he cut quite a good figure. When he captured the town hall and arrested the mayor, we realised with delight that all this was being done solely that he might grant himself his own identity papers. And when, discovering that he had inadvertently hit on a town which had no power to issue papers, he gave himself up, our delight was unchecked because he explained to the police that he did not bother to wear uniform—the greatcoat had been enough. The film, departing I believe from the actual story, lets the Kaiser appreciate the joke so much that the old man receives pardon and papers; that is certainly the logical ending, which clinches the idea—the new idea—that if we go on long enough, quietly, without seizing on events as chances for frustrated dramatic displays, we shall win.

There is as usual, no idea in Harold Lloyd's film, but it is one of his funniest. As for the Marx brothers, they seem a charade after the classic progression of *Der Hauptmann*. Their films are disconnected—they are meant to be; much of their patter is wretched—on purpose. They are America getting its own back on America for

being American and the result is a riot of irreverent destruction. If you like it, you do ; if you do not, it is probably for the wrong reasons. They cannot be reviewed. Harold Lloyd is to be reviewed much as a clock is judged—for keeping good time. All his laughs are timed and spaced ; this is the real merit of his pictures, that of machinery in perfect order. He is the super-cuckoo clock of the screen, every minute of his films has a new little gag popping out, carefully planned to pop out, to pop then and at no other time. The cumulative effect is immense, the playing on anticipation is cunning and the result is that there is one sequence in which scarcely any dialogue can be heard for the laughter. It lasts nearly a reel and has set up a new laugh-record for films, not excluding *The Gold Rush*, where Chaplin's hut tottered on the edge of an abyss for so long.

Being made from Vicki Baum's book, "Grand Hotel" could not help being cheap ; it could not, also, fail to be impressive. A curious result of Edmund Goulding's direction is that most of its dramatic moments, such as the stealing of a wallet and the murder of von Geigen, are slurred. There is also very little sense of a big hotel's organism ; what we get is a film of two women and five elderly men in a hotel that seems remarkably matey for a metropolitan caravanserai. Whether the censor cut short the scene in Flaemmchen's bedroom or whether it was done to prevent Crawford overshadowing Garbo, I do not know. The latter precaution was unnecessary, for Garbo casts, not her shadow, but radiance over the whole film. Her performance gives us the only dancer recognisable in all its implications there has been on the screen. Wallace Beery is excellent as Preysing ; Joan Crawford is Flaemmchen, which is to say that Flaemmchen is Joan Crawford's idea of a typist. It is a tidy, competent portrayal, which misses the nuances Ursula Jeans gave the part on the London stage. There are those who say Crawford will be the next Garbo ; the answer, in the negative, can be found in this film. No one, but Garbo, can so give the radiance of a mature woman's happiness ; for that, and for Kringelein's speech, to Preysing in the bar, the film will do good to masses whom the book did not reach. I would point out that the dialogue is of a higher order than usual in this film, and a good deal of the pity and hunger for happiness here expressed will be expressed for the first time to three quarters of the people who see it. For that reason, *Grand Hotel*, though *Kitsch*, is considerable.

Dialogue also held the audience at *Men of To-morrow*. It would be useless to expect that Leontine Sagan, working in England, would produce another *Mädchen in Uniform*. The story of *Young Apollo* forbade that ; it may be founded on fact, but for screen purposes the facts have been toned down and one feels that Fräulein Sagan was not free to develop the psychological side which is her main interest ; but she has been able to make her central character a young man not at all the English ideal ; there is feeling for the colleges, even if the people do not seem worthy of them, and though it is not the film of University life that waits to be done, it is a film in which that life is not burlesqued, for which, remembering the Oxford of *Hell's Angels*, one is grateful. There seemed to be more of the public school than university spirit about it, but, not knowing Oxford, I cannot say how much that was a mistake.

ROBERT HERRING

POETRY

A TALE OF TROY. By JOHN MASEFIELD. Heinemann. 5s.

POEMS, 1930-31. By W. H. DAVIES. Cape. 5s.

THE ROMAN ROAD. By ROBERT GITTINGS. Oxford University Press. 5s.

HARD LINES. By OGDEN NASH. Duckworth. 6s.

LAST POEMS. By D. H. LAWRENCE. Orioli. 30s.

LOVE LYRICS FROM FIVE CENTURIES. Edited by G. C. Harrap. Harrap.
12s. 6d.

A LITTLE excitement would be much appreciated by this reviewer. Out of a loaded shelf of poetry he has been able to salvage only five volumes, and out of the five there is only one which he is ever likely to open again. Since that is the most expensive, he cannot expect the majority of his readers to buy it, yet it would be cruel to suggest that they console themselves with the other four. On the other hand, among those four is the Laureate, one of our most celebrated lyricists, and a notable American wit, so that they cannot be accused of incompetence. They can be accused of competence, of a deadly ease ; of saying nothing at all ; of saying—and this is to be taken in the most literal sense—nothing without distinction. Few could object to Mr. Davies's charming little poems, few could remember them one from another ; few could complain of Mr. Masefield's *Troy*, few could, in fact, say anything about it at all. From this indictment Mr. Gittings may partly be excepted, because he has got something to say, and Mr. Nash, because he is wholly unpretentious.

A Tale of Troy challenges Homer on his own ground. It is a poem, meant to be recited by seven voices, a narrative rather than a poem, perhaps, much after the manner of a Border ballad. Many will prefer Homer. Recited, it might be fairly effective ; for the verse is swift and light, the style unrhctorical, and the story moves easily from one speaker to another, not in dialogue, but in eleven sections. But the same poem, read, is disastrous. In one of Mr. Masefield's rare moments of rhetoric, Klytaimnestra laments the death of Iphigenia ; and at the close of her speech, the spearman opens with the memorable words :

You have heard the lady, making her complaints,

as though Iphigenia had been a housemaid, and the lament on a broken teapot. The Spearman continues :

I was at Aulis : the gods were angry with us :
They had to be appeased by the King's child.
When that was done, at once the whole curse lifted.
The gods were with us, we sailed, we were successful.

The kindest critic could call this nothing but shocking stuff. There is no need to insult Mr. Masefield by saying he does not know how to write blank verse ; let me suppose that he has chosen to make it, for once, so blank that the verse is imperceptible. Then we have further to suppose that he has chosen to give with this strange blunt instrument a *coup de grace* to each of the great legends of the world. Several have already succumbed, and it will do *Troy* no good to be spoken of after this style :

Only a few days later
 The Trojan killed Achilles in an ambush.
 Our luck was gone that day and theirs was in.
 We thought, "Now Agamemnon will make peace."
 And on that very night the Trojan Paris,
 Who caused the war by bearing off Queen Helen,
 Was killed patrolling at the Skaian Gate.
 We said, "Now this will certainly bring peace . . ."

I know that this is very dull to read and very dull to copy out ; and I guess that it was pretty dull to write. When Mr. Masfield has any sincere emotions he may bring out a good line, but it is pumped-up emotions which inspire a high percentage of his poetry. *A Tale of Troy* is as stale in feeling as a poem can be ; it glories in its simplicity with the self-consciousness of the hand-loom and the cottage pottery. By the time Mr. Masfield has knocked off a few more legends he will notice that his laurels are over one eye.

Mr. Masfield choseth the angular ways of saying nothing, Mr. Davies, like a wood-pigeon, murmurs nothing. Mr. Masfield's lines are stiff and inflexible, Mr. Davies's bend about like a trickle of water. Mr. Masfield's enemies are a dullness and insincerity of emotion which have sometimes before been associated with his office, Mr. Davies's enemy is a deadly charm.

For years and years the charm has worked. Sometimes Mr. Davies has varied his tune with grim little poems about worms and dead children ; sometimes he has remained faithful to the country. There have been pleasant Elizabethan echoes such as *What is this life if full of care*, and other little poems of a real and native beauty. But the range is small ; and once out of the realm of pure poetry a three-stanza lyric becomes an intractable vehicle. Mr. Davies's own idea of the matter seems to be like this :

See where he rides, all hot and fast—
 High on his horse that kicks
 Lightning and thunder out of wind,
 While fools applaud his tricks.

A year or two and, there he lies,
 A bleeding thing, and thrown ;
 Down in the dust he dribbles blood,
 Forgotten and unknown.

Whoa ! Steady now, my little horse,
 A gentle canter past :
 Though faintly cheered, there's nothing gained
 By riding wild and fast.

So Mr. Davies's little horse ambles about and occasionally it is uncertain whether he or his master is speaking. In a poem called *Playmates* the little horse speaks clearly—or so we must think in kindness to Mr. Davies, who speaks no less clearly in *The Chas*, which is delightful. It is hard to believe that there is much of a future for merely conventional country-stuff, or star-stuff, or season-stuff. The brain shies at lines which run *Is this old Autumn standing here*, or *I see the stars in one flock nibbling go*, or *What favourite flowers are mine, I cannot say*. If the little horse was ever so little more enterprising Mr. Davies would be often at his own higher level. The book is decorated with tail-pieces of a notable affectation.

The Roman Road is a model of how to produce a book of poems. The Oxford Press have an unfair advantage in that their volumes of poetry look as if they cannot be bad ;

and *The Roman Road* is not bad. Mr. Gittings writes simply, and writes of simple themes—the stars, the country, the seasons, but in no conventional way. Instead of an arabesque he makes a poem :

The blackbirds in the mild wet blossom-time
Cry in the drenching thorn—
Crying not to be borne.
By hearts too quick to take another clime.

The rain smokes from the roofs, the fields forget
Their dusty harrowing,
But old heart-sowings cling
That all too early felt the violet.

Yet the full heart takes more and still can hold
The softening and the rime,
The flood, the tempest-time.
Season'd and green with singings unforetold.

There are other poems as good in this book which, though Mr. Gittings has not a wide range, is certainly more likely to be re-read than the two mentioned before it.

Many of Mr. Nash's verses have appeared, unless I am wrong, in the *New Yorker*. They are for those who like a quiet and yet crazy form of humour, and by them they will be found enchanting. Personally, I find them the best book of funny verse—an art in which Americans, who alone can be funny in phrases, seldom excel—published for some time.

So much has been written of D. H. Lawrence that his name is becoming for the moment unbearable. His *Last Poems* are a jumble ; some, in the manner of *Pansies*, some, sketches for a long poem, and one, *The Ship of Death*, easily the finest thing in verse he accomplished. For that alone this book is worth buying, though it is the only finished section of the long poem he did not live to write. Mr. Aldington has collaborated in the difficult editing of the poems, which were contained in two manuscript notebooks, and he also has contributed a short introduction.

Mr. Harrap's collection of love lyrics shows, for an editor who has had enough experience of publishing to lose his first appetite for books, a remarkable catholicity. The lyrics are admirably chosen, not merely from the known sources of the Carolines and Victorians, but from current English and American literature, often obscure, as well. The illustrations are not to be commended, but with that reservation the production of the book is worthy of its admirable contents.

ALAN PRYCE-JONES

FICTION

QUEER STREET. By EDWARD SHANKS. Macmillan. 10s. 6d.

PEKING PICNIC. By ANN BRIDGE. 7s. 6d.

FOREIGN BODIES. By N. GUBSKY. Elkin Mathews & Marrot. 7s. 6d.

PILATE'S WIFE. By JEAN DAMASE. Duckworth. 7s. 6d.

IT is several years since Mr. Shanks wrote his first novels, and they were mostly essays in fantastic imagination, such as *The People of the Ruins* and *The Richest Man*. But they were the results, nevertheless, of an acute observation and they were written with a competent and brilliant pen. His new novel is rich in both of these qualities, though the world it deals with is not fantasy but fact—albeit it may seem a fantastic one to some of us. It is ungrateful, perhaps, to say of so good a long novel that it could have been shorter; while I record this belief I hasten to add that it deserves gratitude. To begin with it is by an expert writer, to read whom is a labour that brings its own reward. With what appreciation, and admiring thanks, one reads such a description as the following of the household of the rather shabby individual whose family animates the progress of the story!

. . . for a moment or two Mr. Cartaret was unable to manage his latchkey. That, he reckoned, would have the effect of sending Auntie Mabel to ground. Her spiritual resemblance to a domestic servant was a good thing in the ordinary way, but it was unfortunately accompanied by a physical resemblance that made her better out of sight on such occasions as this. . . .

Here is Mr. Cartaret's home given and received at a glance. Such swift workmanship is pleasure and a stimulation in one. It insures that we read on greedy for more, and we are soon satisfied :

They ran down a narrow street, bordered with small wooden houses, and into the village square. The church, the inn, a long low house, covered with climbing roses, and the village store—these, and a dog thoughtfully scratching itself in the middle of the square, as though motors had not yet been invented, had a profound air of sunny sleepiness. Phyllis avoided the dog with a neatness suggesting that it was an obstacle marked on her road map, and they swung round the church and up a newly made drive.

And later :

Phyllis, who had heard the breaks, sauntered round from the stables and entered his vision as a newly poignant thought enters a mind numbed with pain.

I could quote such terse and quickening phrases for ever, so to say; the book is packed with them: enough to keep anyone's attention alert. That is for anyone who knows a good thing when he sees it. But it is not only the writing that ensures this. The constructive progress of the plot is equally accomplished. The little effects that lead up to the climax are indicated as subtly as is the use of a house by a good architect. There is an inevitability about the "curve" of the story that should (according to Robert Louis Stevenson, and I concur) be felt in every story; otherwise it is no story but merely a mass of patchwork. Mr. Shanks is both a workman and an artist; his book is planned and executed on a very high level of professional attainment. The only disappointment that interferes with enjoyment is the thematic material he has chosen; but in this a personal response is involved. If you care for the kind of life he describes, then you need have no disappointments; his characters behave as people in such a setting would behave. The scene in which the shady financier

realises, in company with his partner in crime, that it is all up—that, like Clarence Hatry, the best way to save themselves, now, is to give themselves up—is not only masterly but very poignant. Sympathy wells up for the nerve and restraint that the broken Sir Maurice (of such flash and splendour) displays in the crisis; as, when young, we accorded our admiration to the accounts of historical, gallant disobedience (technically treachery and liable to punishment by death), by daring made successful. Mr. Shanks has created something that lives in this short, dramatic scene.

Peking Picnic is a first novel and should have a deserved success. It is the expression of a personality. A patently sincere and thoughtful woman (the authoress) displays herself unflinchingly to the world. By this I do not mean that the book is an obvious autobiography, though undoubtedly it is very largely autobiographical. What is obviously displayed the whole way through these pages is the acutely felt reactions of a single personality to all the problems of life which that personality has had to face; and they are the reactions of a mature and “refined” woman to modern love, one whose qualities have come to be what they are through the refining processes of life, and whose secret thoughts have been extracted in the furnace. It is also a book written by a loving observer of nature, and an open and receptive one. Her path having taken her to China, she has not shut herself up in her memories of England and all she loves there; though she leads a double life within her head, half the time with her children in England and the other with her husband and the British Legation in Peking, she is completely alive to the influence that China can exert, and never refuses to acknowledge the spell. Receptivity is the key to her character; and, like a pianist who is also a composer, she is able to translate her experiences as well as to receive them.

The story is simple: a party of British residents in Peking arrange a week-end picnic to a temple in the mountains. Trouble is brewing (as usual) among the Chinese military rulers, and bandits see their opportunity. The party is captured; but is rescued timely by their friends. This is the plot. The actual story is the tracing of the love-affairs that develop in the party. Mrs. Leroy has two charming nieces staying with her; “the Kuniangs,” they are cheerfully nicknamed by her friends. (“In Mandarin the word ‘kuniang’ denotes an unmarried girl of rank—literally, a virgin.”) Their characters are diverse and good. There is also an American girl of a rare and unusual type, an American lady novelist of a well-known type, and Laura Leroy; a General and his wife are uninteresting and need no mention. The other men of the party who count consist of a Professor who is visiting China and two young men of the Secretariat, one French and one English. The two young men are both bon-viveurs—“ladies’ men” in their various national ways; the Professor is of a finer grain, a man who has suffered in love and become a spectator of life, not a participator. I will not unfold the details of their fallings in love (for this readers may go to the book) but conclude with some quotations from the text to illustrate the many good points of this remarkable book. The style is crisp, as this will show:

A band was playing in one of the pavilions, a buffet was being served from behind and depleted from in front in another.

And what a good conclusion to a chapter this is:

A cold draught from the hall caught the door as they went out; it slammed behind them. In the deepening dusk the room was left deserted. The glowing Fantin-Latour over the mantelpiece, and the one or two Riches and Arnold-Forsters on the walls looked down on the formal chintzes, the Kabiristan rugs, and the Queen Anne tallboy and escritoire which made Mrs. Leroy’s drawing-room so English, and so unusual in Peking. There was not a

single Chinese thing in it except the earthenware bowls in which freesias stood blooming everywhere. Their scent contended now with the fading smell of the cocktails of the emptied glasses—as the night wind blew in through the open French windows it conquered, and at last had the room to itself.

I hope I have indicated enough of the stuff of this memorable book to attract many readers to it. I will append my only serious criticism, and I would not mention it if it were not a fault that could be very easily amended. In order to indicate that one of the young men is a Frenchman, Miss Bridge resorts to the practice of retailing his conversation half in French and half in English, thus :—“ *Mais je vous assure que c'est impossible !* ” said Henri vigorously. “ And you pretend to possess her heart and mind; you will be like one person ? *Cela n'arrive jamais, mon ami.* ’Ow will you possess a woman’s mind ? ’Er body, yes, but her mind ? *Vous confondez toujours les choses.* ” This sort of reading is not only bothering to the reader but completely untrue to life. In talking to a foreigner one either makes no attempt to essay his language, or one struggles bravely to think and speak in his idiom—forgetting one’s own. Nobody could possibly think in two languages at once through a prolonged dialogue like this one ; occasionally if stumped for a word, one may be obliged to fall back upon the only one one knows, but no one could ever talk indiscriminately in two languages at once like this. It is a mistake that so many imperfectly skilled writers make that I am constrained to draw Miss Bridge’s attention to it, in all good faith.

The English and Scotch have one great asset in common ; they will always enjoy a joke directed against themselves. It is, indeed, rumoured that all the jokes about Aberdonians are invented in Aberdeen, and I should not be surprised if Mr. Gubsky turned out to be the most English Mr. Gubbins ever born—if he did not know his “ foreign bodies ” so well. For understanding other nationalities is not, on the other hand, an Englishman’s strong point. Be that as it may, Mr. Gubsky’s book, written from the point of view of the Russian emigré in London after the war, is a book that all English people will enjoy.

“ Funny people,” observed the boy, and had a peep at the label attached to one of the cases. “ Echh, what a name ! ” he said in naïve astonishment. “ Krch-ken-kin. Oh, Lord ! ”

The porter, in his turn, glanced at the label.

“ Belgians,” he said with assurance, and after a pause. “ They never wash,” he added. He knew all about foreigners.

Again :—

The air was thick with tobacco smoke, and when you opened a window waves of clammy, smelly fog would roll into the room making everyone cough and shout, “ Do shut it, for Christ’s sake ! ” Being Russians they did not enjoy what the Londoner calls fresh air.

Or again this :—

Golf, on the other hand made him sneer. . . . To call that sport ! To fill columns in the papers with it ! He did not know that in adult English conversation golf occupies more space than politics, literature and philosophy added together.

Such gibes at his country will make an irresistible appeal to the average Englishman, and it is on these merits that the novel must stand or fall. It is, otherwise, a roughly constructed affair. The characters are picked up and dropped again all over the place. For a time our interest is intrigued by the character of Natasha, a daughter of the Kurtcheninovs, but then she is lost in the story and we think of her no more. Madame Kurtcheninov’s sweet and gentle nature runs consistently through the book, but not enough is made of it. Ivan, her husband, is but a foil for his own confusions, and other characters appear and disappear like the people in a pantomime. But, as in a pantomime, there is never a dull moment ; in spite of the digressiveness of the whole it is

too amusing in parts not to be popular, and will infallibly be enjoyed by everyone who reads it. No mere buffoonery, however, could have written this book ; it is the outcome of a happy impartiality combined with a clear cutting vision, and both the Russian and English are pilloried side by side. The penetrating shafts are directed at both, but never in malice.

I come next to a novel that held me spell-bound as I read. *Pilate's Wife* is in the nature of an allegory. The scene is Syria, the characters the Governor of the French town of Latakia (old Laodicea), his wife, the Secretary, and a prophet. The prophet, or Nadi, has many of the characteristics of Christ. He preaches love, tolerance, humility, and a promised Kingdom on Earth. The native population of Moslems, Arabs and their priesthood are outraged. The women, on the other hand, listen to his message with eager thirst. He tells them they have souls ; that they should enter into the places of worship with the men, he says :

" Do you not know that you are the particle of the Divine which Heaven has vouchsafed to the earth ? " . . .

" Oh men, deluded, made fearblind by your books, have you not yet learnt that woman is divine ? Do you not know that there is a portion of God, sent into this world to create, as He created, to give life, as He gave it ? "

He heals their sick children by the power of his hands. The students (who have read Bernard Shaw) also shout in his favour. He preaches revolutionary Socialism, they are all for him. But the hide-bound priests and village sheiks are scandalised as by blasphemy . . . " he heals in the devil's name ! "

Finally, owing to the disturbance caused by the crowds the Captain, Alexandre-Olympe Godillard, Chief Secretary to the Governor, uses his civil power to effect an arrest, and so save the Nadi from ill-treatment. He is put in prison for conniving at a riot. The High Commissioners is telephoned to ; he replies irascibly, that it is the definite rule that no interference with religious matters can be made by the Mandatory Power, and orders the Nadi's immediate release. So this modern Pilate, the Governor Colonel Benoist-Douville, gives orders that the prophet be handed over to the religious courts of the Mohammedans, and washes his hands of the whole affair.

An undercurrent of another kind of emotion meanwhile runs through the book. It is concerned with the Governor's wife and the Captain. He is a dreamy young man whose imagination has been captivated by the East and its history and legends, and has been too long away from contact with European women. She is an unawakened girl still, though twenty-eight, married to an old man. In the absence of her petty provincial interests at home in France she finds her mind becoming preoccupied, even obsessed, by exotic dreams born of tales the Captain tells her of the Phœnician times in Syria and their Festivals of Love. While she longs to be ravished by the Captain, he wonders if he dares take her as he wishes. Nothing comes of their ardent dreams. She is brought back by a shock to her former well-trained submission to the rules of religion and of her social order. He thanks his lucky stars that he escaped the temptation to attempt the conquest of such a pure woman. This is the gist of the book. Its writing and detail is perfect to its purpose. The scenes are arranged in a sequence that grows to the final climax of both emotional disturbances ; they march in a stride of just the right measurement ; the writing is terse, objective and sparkling. M. Damase is to be congratulated upon this brilliant first novel of his, and the publishers upon securing it. The translation is, also, quite excellent.

J. E. S. ARROWSMITH

LITERARY HISTORY & CRITICISM—I

THACKERAY, A PERSONALITY. By MALCOLM ELWIN. Jonathan Cape. 12s. 6d.
A FITZGERALD FRIENDSHIP. Edited by NEILSON CAMPBELL HANNAY, B.D.,
Ph.D. Faber & Faber. 15s.

THE WIFE OF ROSSETTI. By VIOLET HUNT. John Lane. 18s.

THE LETTERS OF SIR WALTER SCOTT. Edited by H. J. C. GRIERSON, M.A.,
LL.D., D.Litt. Constable. 18s.

SIR WALTER'S POST-BAG. Edited by WILFRED PARTINGTON. John Murray. 16s.

A LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT. By S. FOWLER WRIGHT. Poetry League. 21s.

THE author of *Thackeray, A Personality*, shows a most unusual restraint in the matter of preface and introduction. There is neither. Modestly, Mr. Elwin has explained his purpose in a brief and unpretentious postscript. In this, he says :

But in spite of the fact that Thackeray revealed himself with vivid clarity both in his works and the voluminous masses of letters which have been published from time to time in one form or another, he remains a figure of deeper mystery than any of his contemporaries. Books have been written about him . . . but no adequate portrait of his personality has yet appeared. It is the aim of this book to supply that deficiency, pending the appearance of that definitive biography which must, sooner or later, be written after consultation with all available documents, manuscripts and letters. Here are no pretensions to finality : the author's aim is to depict the personality of Thackeray against the background of his career.

And so the book does, very well indeed, impressing one by its sincerity and capable preparation rather than by any attempt at dazzling 'brilliance.'

A picture of the man's personality against the background of his career is especially interesting in the case of Thackeray, who put so much of himself into his books. Too much, the retiring FitzGerald said ; but Thackeray had a different temperament :

Essentially gregarious, he loved good company and would sit up to any hour rather than break up a convivial party. 'Solitude,' he once told his mother, 'creates a muzziness and incoherence in me.'

FitzGerald lived the greater part of his life in quiet seclusion, cherishing a few deep friendships and disapproving of Thackeray's more worldly tastes. Because they were so unlike, it is the more surprising that their friendship should have continued so many years ; and on the occasions when the relation was a little strained, the causes can be traced to these differences.

But in spite of his gregariousness, Thackeray was not without shyness. As a public speaker, he never succeeded. Once, he was to speak after Dickens and Bulwer, both eloquent. His jealousy of Dickens, which cannot be explained away entirely—obviously, it existed—may have had something to do with the careful preparation of what he considered a splendid speech. Dickens and Bulwer spoke ; Thackeray arose :

For three minutes he spoke perfectly ; then, 'In the middle of a most earnest and elaborate sentence he suddenly stopped, gave a look of comic despair at the ceiling, crammed both hands into his pockets, and deliberately sat down. Everyone,' said Fields, 'seemed to understand that it was one of Thackeray's unfinished speeches and there were no signs of surprise or discontent among his audience.'

From Mr. Elwin's pages there emerges the figure of a great man, a man almost entirely loveable, but not without the salt of human frailty. Perhaps there is a slight,

very slight tendency to defend and explain away Thackeray's less admirable traits ; but this is a fault which can be more easily condoned than the other extreme.

Mr. Elwin has not made the dramatic story of Thackeray's life into melodrama—which could have been done, all too easily. Born in Calcutta, young Thackeray showed signs of brilliance at an early age, but it was many years before he knew definitely that he would be a writer. For several years his vacillations between art, the law and journalism caused his mother some anxiety. Indeed, had it not been for the loss of his fortune we might not have his books. That and his early marriage made it necessary for him to settle upon one thing. His marriage, at first so happy, was tragic in its outcome. For more than twenty years he was married to a woman who had lost her mind, and he was a man who needed the companionship of women. Gossip was inevitable, if unjustified. Charlotte Brontë blunderingly added no little to this. Thackeray bore it all with dignity and patience, and was to the end of his life unfailing in his care for his unfortunate wife. His long friendship with Mrs. Brookfield may have been more than friendship, but there is no evidence to show that Thackeray behaved other than well. Mr. Elwin handles this subject with the sympathy it deserves.

After reading the life of Thackeray, *A FitzGerald Friendship* is all the more interesting. This is a small volume of hitherto unpublished letters from Edward FitzGerald to William Bodham Donne and his sons, edited by Professor Hannay in collaboration with Mrs. Catherine Bodham Johnson. The letters add little to our knowledge of FitzGerald and they are not remarkable as letters go ; yet they have charm. Shortly after Thackeray's death, FitzGerald wrote to Donne :

I wrote to Charles about Thackeray. I have been reading his Books, as well as Letters, and can scarce believe the Great Spirit is quenched—*Now* I wish he were alive that I might write and tell him how the Newcomes were illuminating my long Evenings. But, if he were alive, I don't think he'd care to be told so by me now ; and I'm sure I can't wonder, nor (least of all) blame him.

In view of Thackeray's unfailingly affectionate, even if not frequent, letters to FitzGerald, the last statement seems a little strange ; and only a month after writing this letter, FitzGerald wrote to Donne's son :

. . . I have been quite happy again with some of Scott's Novels, & Boswell's Johnson ; both fresh as Dew. It is a great comfort to be able to return to such Books. I have also read Thackeray's *Pendennis* & *Newcomes* again—wonderful too—but not so comfortable—I think some of the Panegyrics in the *Papers* & *Reviews* throw some light on what I have been told of his later years ; he must have got surrounded with a set of Praise-plasterers, so as scarce to be able to breathe without it. Twenty years ago he used to let out against Authors' bepraising one another—But he remains something of a *Great Man* after all. I feel how he, Scott and Johnson could have coggled well together—

Professor Hannay has printed the letters verbatim as to punctuation and the capitalizing of nouns. The book is very attractive in design and typography, and contains a most ingeniously inserted facsimile letter. The frontispiece is a hitherto unpublished portrait, reproduced in colour, of FitzGerald as a young man, by W. M. Thackeray. There was some doubt as to whether it was a portrait of Thackeray by FitzGerald, or of FitzGerald by Thackeray, because each was known to have painted a portrait of the other ; but Professor Hannay feels that it is proved to be the work of Thackeray.

Through many long talks with her father, Miss Violet Hunt was able to collect a wealth of incident and episode for her book on the wife of Rossetti ; but, emerging rather out of breath after a struggle through its violently exclamatory, gossipy, and sentimental pages, it is not easy to form an opinion of its value. One thing is certain : the book will make many people more sympathetic toward Rossetti, which does not

seem to have been the author's intention. That he was unkind, unfaithful, even brutal to his wife, there is little doubt. His nature would have tried the patience of an angel, and his wife, although she had the gold hair of a celestial being, was lacking in some of the other attributes. It is not easy to find out what she *was* like, from a book filled with hundreds of characters coming and going in great confusion and called suddenly by their first names or nicknames. One wearies of passages like this :

At ten they went home, sent the lady to bed, and began to tell tales.

Gabriel and Lizzie first ! Munro told him all about Paris and how fond of Lizzy Gabriel seemed to be. Over, then the reign of Annie Miller ! Annie's new beau was Boyce. Did Hunt mind ? He had objected, as her self-constituted guardian, to Gabriel's flirtation with her last year. Boyce had to ask leave to paint Annie but Gabriel just took her, etc.

Ruskin, Swinburne, Morris, Coventry Patmore and Carlyle, wander, with hundreds of others in a sort of mob scene for a Pre-Raphaelite movie, entitled ' Behind The Scenes With The Brethren.' Many things are said : some of them best left unsaid.

There has been an unusual spontaneity and wholeheartedness about the celebration of the Scott Centenary, and an unusual number of good books brought out in connection with it. The Centenary Edition of Sir Walter Scott's letters is to bring all of the available ones together. Here are ninety-eight which have not been published before, and two hundred seldom published without amending and changing, sometimes unscrupulously. In this volume, an attempt has been made to print them as accurately as possible. In his preface, Professor Grierson explains the difficulties involved and the few slight compromises he was forced to make. Assisted by Mr. Davidson Cook, Mr. William Parker and others, Professor Grierson has produced an ably edited and valuable edition to the list of Scott Centenary books. Scott was a good correspondent—a delightful one, no doubt, to his friends. Read now, the letters are interesting chiefly for the light they throw on his life and personality, reflecting as they do the sweetness and fineness of the man.

Although certainly not intended as companion volumes, the Letters and Mr. Wilfred Partington's second selection from Scott's private letter books go well together. We should be grateful to Scott for realizing how his correspondence would interest people in years to come, and for saving his letters in scrap books after he had answered them ; and grateful to Mr. Partington for the selections given in *Sir Walter's Post-bag*. Following a plan somewhat different from that of his first selection, in this one he has included extracts from unpublished writings, using them to weave a tale around the letters. The publisher has been generous with illustrations. There are many portraits of Scott's correspondents (who included the most famous people of his time), with an extract from their letters under each one. One need not be a lover of Scott, to appreciate this book.

It has been said that a man who publishes a book without an index " ought to be damned ten miles beyond Hell, where the Devil could not get for stinging nettles." That punishment may not fit the crime, but whoever publishes the *Life* of any man without an index and a bibliography need not expect to have it taken seriously. Mr. S. Fowler Wright's *Life of Sir Walter Scott* is designed, he says in a note, to give a clearer picture than Lockhart's. The result is more of a novel than a biography. (This may account for the absence of index, bibliography—and table of contents.) The *Life* may be recommended to those who like their biography with a sugar-coating of narrative.

HELEN MORAN

LITERARY HISTORY & CRITICISM—II.

CRITICISM. By DESMOND MACCARTHY. Putnam. 7s. 6d.

LETTERS OF MRS. GASKELL AND CHARLES ELIOT NORTON. Edited and with an Introduction by JANE WHITEHILL. Oxford University Press. 10s. 6d.

VIRGINIA WOOLF. By Winifred Holtby. Wishart. 6s.

ESSAYS AND STUDIES. By members of THE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION. Clarendon Press. 7s. 6d.

THE YEAR'S WORK IN ENGLISH STUDIES. Vol XI. 1930. Edited for the English Association by F. S. BOAS. Oxford University Press. 10s. 6d.

STUDIES IN SPENSER'S HISTORICAL ALLEGORY. By EDWIN GREENLAW. Johns Hopkins Press. 11s.

THE ENGLISH POETIC MIND. By CHARLES WILLIAMS. Oxford University Press. 7s. 6d.

RIGHT at the beginning of his book Mr. Desmond MacCarthy gives a very lucid definition of a critic. "A critic," he writes,

is one who has been given a pass-key into many rooms in the House of Art on condition that he does not dwell in any one of them. His part is to open a door, examine the furniture of the room, and compare the view from its window with those to be seen from others . . . his visits to other rooms enable him to know things about the work he is examining which the creator of it, who has never shifted from his own window, cannot know.

Aware, then, of this rule of life he makes the rather lonely pronouncement that the critic is a creature without a spiritual home. In the sense of which he is thinking this is of course true, inasmuch as he is denied the solace of specialization, but, on the other hand, what panoramic pleasures, what selections, what compensations he enjoys!

Criticism is a valuable book because it proceeds from an active and vigorous mind unshackled by small considerations and prejudices and able at a glance to tear the heart out of a writer's work, assimilating by a natural instinct what is worthy of preservation, and automatically rejecting negligible matter. All the essays are interesting studies, many of them from the psychological angle. Mr. MacCarthy has judiciously introduced, among those on contemporary writers, articles upon masters and demi-masters of the past who, by their very nature, were either in advance of their age or who have some special affinity with writers of the present day. Thus comparison is made between Richardson and Proust; Defoe and Mr. David Garnett. Several essays take the form of generalisations; some for the benefit of readers, others for that of young authors, self-styled and otherwise.

If one is to select any of these for particular preference mention should be made of those essays on Donne, Proust, Beckford, Samuel Butler and David Garnett. And if some (and they are sure to exist), will disgustedly complain that Miss Stein has been unjustly pilloried, there will be many more to say that she was asking for trouble.

During ten years the author of *Cranford* kept up an enterprising correspondence with Charles Eliot Norton, a reflective gentleman from New England, of sober upbringing and Unitarian belief. They renewed their acquaintance in Rome whither in the early spring of 1857 Mrs. Gaskell and her two daughters, revolting from the grime of Manchester, had proceeded for a holiday on the strength of advanced royalties received from her *Life of Charlotte Brontë*. This beautifully produced little

book perpetuates a sincere and loyal friendship which, after both parties had returned to their own countries was to be strengthened by the ties of an energetic correspondence. On Norton's side it was dignified, lofty and restrained ; with little that could be described as humour and nothing that did not contain earnest and elevating matter. But Mrs. Gaskell's participation was altogether sprightly. Whether on the sofa racked with neuralgia, or flustered by a houseful of visitors she seems to have been able to keep up a perpetual rattle of information, always cheerful, on occasion mildly coy, and never malicious. There is a wealth of domestic detail that elbows its way through Housing Problems, Puseyism, and the then Prince of Wales at Oxford. There are references to the siege of Lucknow and the massacre of Cawnpore and an assertion that Dr. Arnold lacked a sense of humour. Then there is a most lively description by Mrs. Gaskell of a meeting with Rossetti :

I think we got to know Rossetti pretty well. I went three times to his studio, and met him at two evening parties—where I had a good deal of talk with him, always excepting the times when ladies with beautiful hair came in when he was like the cat turned into a lady, who jumped out of bed and ran after a mouse. It did not signify what we were talking about or how agreeable I was ; if a particular kind of reddish brown, crepe wavy hair came in, he was away in a moment struggling for an introduction to the owner of said head of hair. He was not as mad as a March hare, but hair-mad.

Mrs. Gaskell had been particularly attracted to some papers then appearing anonymously in Blackwood. " Read *Scenes from Clerical Life*, published in Blackwood . . . They are a discovery of my own, and I am so proud of them. Do read them. I have not a notion who wrote them." She discovered the authorship soon enough. The circumstances about Miss Evans' mode of living were most distressing ; they were communicated to Mr. Norton.

All this is miserable enough,—but I believe there are many excuses—the worst is that Mr. Lewes' character and opinions were formerly *at least*, so bad.

Miss Holtby has written a short but pertinent study of Mrs. Virginia Woolf and it is noteworthy that although this is a critical essay she has placed it on a biographical foundation. That is to say, she attributes, to a certain degree, the peculiar genius of her subject to the direct influence of circumstances and environment during childhood. One cannot help thinking that as a key to the writings of Mrs. Woolf this study should prove useful. It covers, briefly, all her work up to date, analysing symbols and comparing characters ; it shows up particularly the cinematic quality of her methods, the use of perspective whether telescopic or microscopic ; and although Miss Holtby manifestly admires she does not slavishly flatter neither does she abstain from criticism candid though detached. The following remarks, it seems to me, are expressive of the general and individual attitude towards Mrs. Woolf and her writings :

She has been accused of making too narrow a survey of that [the Georgian] age. Her eyes are fixed, some say, on a little clique of intellectuals, the whole sum of whose work is hardly discernible by the general public. Her justification is, probably, that she is dealing with a tendency rather than with a generation.

To turn to Mr. MacCarthy's metaphor, she looks from that room of her own that she has decorated, out upon a corner of the great grounds of civilization, and I think we must agree that the view which she enjoys is very rare.

In a miscellany of papers with nothing to link them together but the fact that they are written by members of the English Association it is hard to establish some sort of standard by which to measure them. They are mostly quiet, academic treatises with just not too much of dryness to prevent them from being readable.

The Archbishop of York and M. Maurois are among the contributors and the subjects range from Boswell's Archives to Place-names and their pronunciation. M. Maurois has submitted a view, already receiving attention and interest, that Proust was extremely, almost solely, indebted to English men of letters and to Ruskin in particular. The most robust of all these essays is one *Jorrocks: A Conversation*. It is in the form of a dialogue in which the author, Mr. W. L. Renwick takes the opportunity to chastise the anaemic tendencies now prevalent in literature, arguing that the violent though slipshod blood-sportsmanship of Surtees is worth, because of its sincerity, all the effete professional field-sportsmanship of to-day and its counterpart in writing. "So," he concludes, "one page of St. John's *Wild Sports in the Highlands* makes *Point Counter-Point* look like a six-cylindere motor-engine with lipstick . . ."

Accompanying the previous volume appears *The Year's Work in English Studies*. As usual the members of the English Association get the benefit of this publication, chiefly intended for them, at a reduced price. It reviews the whole of the year's principal literary output, excluding fiction, and consists of the usual papers surveying Middle English, the Elizabethans, Shakespeariana, and so on up to the Nineteenth Century and after. It is impossible to enumerate them all; the volume is useful reference for students and needs no introduction.

There is little to say of *Studies in Spenser's Historical Allegory*. Four papers delivered on various occasions at the Johns Hopkins University by Professor Greenlaw a Spenserian scholar, are here reprinted, two of them for the first time. In a foreword Mr. Ray Heffner explains that, owing to Prof. Greenlaw's death early in 1931 he has reserved for himself the task of arranging them, but that from motives of reverence he has refrained from alterations, while realising that had the author lived he had shown every indication of modifying some of his theories. The publication is chiefly intended as a tribute to his memory.

Mr. Charles Williams' new volume of criticism, *The English Poetic Mind* is primarily based on the conviction that there is in all great poetry a moment of crisis. He refers principally to the central crisis in *Troilus and Cressida* and finds it in "direct poetic relation" to Wordsworth's own crisis in *The Prelude*. From this he sets off to discover whether these culminating moments have any parallel in the works of other and lesser English poets. He very naturally gives pride of place to Shakespeare but to the work of Wordsworth he really seems to devote too much importance. The monumental task of *The Prelude* makes very heavy weather. It is all rather involved and, in any case, no amount of argument in theory ever determined the wayward and glorious course of the Muse of Poetry.

YVONNE FFRENCH

BIOGRAPHY AND MEMOIRS

THE LIFE OF MARY KINGSLEY. By STEPHEN GWYNN. Macmillan. 12s. 6d.

WAR MEMORIES. By PRINCESS MARIE DE CROY. Macmillan. 8s. 6d.

FRANCIS BACON. By MARY STURT. Kegan Paul. 10s. 6d.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ANTHONY À WOOD. Edited and with an Introduction by LLEWELYN POWYS. Wishart. 15s.

RAFAEL, CARDINAL MERRY DEL VAL. By F. A. FORBES. Longmans. 6s.

THE courage and endurance of women, the cool indifference to physical danger which they can display in times of emergency, are qualities which have been demonstrated, in our own times, before the eyes of the world ; so that we can no longer pretend to regard a female warrior as a freak or a saint, as most of our ancestors did. At the same time female explorers have become so common in all the most dangerous and out of the way parts of the world that they almost outnumber, and easily out-write, the men. And most of them, no doubt, would be quite willing to give advice on questions of colonial administration. Yet the figure of Mary Kingsley remains alone, unapproachable, unique, not only for her intrepidity, but for her wisdom and statesmanship ; not only for her statesmanship, but for her eccentric, masterful, lovable personality, so modern, and yet so essentially Victorian, of which we can never see the like again.

Mr. Stephen Gwynn, working under great difficulties—for Mary Kingsley's own papers have all been lost and many of her letters gone astray since her death in 1900—has produced a study of the life and character of this extraordinary woman which seems to me to rank as one of the best short biographies of recent times. Though so much material was lacking, he managed to collect a large number of her letters. Mary Kingsley, fortunately for her biographer, was a wonderful letter-writer. Realising this, Mr. Gwynn quotes extensively both from published and unpublished correspondence, so that his portrait of Mary Kingsley, is in large part, a self-portrait, and all the more vital and convincing for that. We see her stalking through the African jungles, among cannibals and crocodiles, clothed from head to foot in stiff conventional black, with that amazing bonnet on the back of her head, an umbrella instead of a rifle in her hand. She would never consent to wear riding breeches (no one dared to mention shorts) nor learn the art of shooting things, which seemed to her, as she said half-humorously, "not ladylike." When a leopard attacked her dog, "I seized an earthen water-cooler and flung it straight at them." "It was a noble shot," she adds proudly, "it burst on the leopard's head like a shell, and the leopard went for bush one time." We see her driving off a hippopotamus with her umbrella : for she was stranded on a small island at the time, and did not consider there was room on it for two. We see her studying the native question at first hand, getting the points of view of traders, missionaries and officials, understanding all of them with that masculine common sense of hers, defending them against unjust attacks. We see her back in England, writing books and newspaper articles, lecturing everywhere (usually without a fee), handing out advice to Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, E. D. Morel—in fact any one who asked for it, and all the wise ones did. She was a great influence in her time, and a great Imperialist of the saner sort. She never thought that African savages were any the worse for being prevented from murdering each other, or for learning to salute the Union Jack, or becoming Christians, or even

necessarily for drinking gin in place of the local fire-water. But it was the very bedrock of her policy that native interests should always be considered first.

These problems which preoccupied her get settled somehow, each in its own way ; the fierce controversies of the 'nineties already sound dimly in our ears. But the gallant personality of Mary Kingsley, and her vigorous, explosive writing (of which her *Travels in West Africa* is the best example) ought never to be forgotten, since she stands for much that was best in the nineteenth century and is quite irreplaceable. Mr. Gwynn, therefore, has performed a great service. And if I have spoken little of him, though so much of his subject, that is an unconscious tribute to the unobtrusive skill with which he has worked.

Another memorial to the heroism of women, and another most unusual and fascinating book in its way, is the Princess Marie de Croy's *War Memories*. This patriotic Belgian lady, whose family had occupied their ancestral home at Bellignies long before modern Belgium existed, was, as everyone knows, a friend of Nurse Cavell's and a leading spirit in that gallant band of men and women who daily risked their lives in order to help Allied soldiers—in her case mostly Englishmen—across the frontier. So far as I know, this is the first intimate, personal narrative of the war behind the front in Belgium. A very high order of courage was required of those who engaged in it. It is one thing to meet an enemy in hot blood ; it is another to endure week after week the " feeling of revolt, of nausea almost, that the sight of the enemy in one's own country provokes," while the search parties tramp through your house knocking at the walls, breaking the furniture, and the English soldiers crouch in the hidden staircase in the old tower, scarcely daring to breathe, and the hostess must maintain a smiling, cheerful countenance, knowing that a single indiscreet word may mean imprisonment or death for all. Not enough is known of the work of these heroic women, and of the strange adventures of the men they helped. One party of twenty or thirty Englishmen, commanded by a young officer of the Dragoon Guards, lived for weeks a kind of Robin Hood existence in the woods near Bellignies, until the Princess was able to pack them into her staircase, and afterwards slip them across the Dutch frontier in small parties. Others lay hidden till the end of the war. We have heard one or two of their stories, but not nearly enough. "Volumes might be written," say the Princess de Croy. I hope they will.

On one Sunday morning, at a time of great difficulty and peril, she carried into the tower where the British fugitives lay, a number of prayer-books, Roman Catholic and English, and suggested that the men might like to hold a service among themselves and pray for help :

When I turned to leave the room one of the two sergeants came forward and, saluting, said, " If you please, will you hold the service ? " " I fear I cannot," I answered, " as I am a Catholic and I daresay you are not of the same faith." Pointing to a group of men, " These are Roman Catholics," said he, " and these are Church of England, while my comrade and myself are Presbyterians, but we are all Christians and would like you to conduct the service." So, taking up one of the missals, I read the Gospel and Epistle for the day, while all the men knelt round the table, and joined in as simply as children praying at their mother's knee. The little service over, I left them, feeling more moved than I can say.

That passage is characteristic of this quiet, moving, little book. The account of her interview with Nurse Cavell, shortly before they and all their friends were arrested, has the same quality—inspiring us with a respect for both women, which is beyond words. The Princess was not sentenced to be shot—she was not, as she remarks, one of " the hated English "—but she spent the rest of the war in German prisons, where her companions were mostly common malefactors and the general conditions

were abominable. She was out in time to witness King Albert's entry into Brussels and is not ashamed to confess that she wept. But it is unfashionable to mention these things. Are we not all trying to forget the "war spirit"? I will only add that it appears clearly from this book that the Germans brought this whole business of escaping soldiers on themselves. While they posted up notices everywhere demanding that Allied soldiers in hiding should be given up, they invariably arrested those who reported them and put them on trial as accomplices, and not infrequently shot them together with the men they had given up! So that the remaining refugees naturally continued in hiding, and compassionate women began to feed them, and so the whole thing began. Yet not more than would have made a battalion of infantry ever got clear away. For that the Germans shot Nurse Cavell.

Francis Bacon, undoubtedly one of the most talked-about men in English history, has this serious grievance against the biographers, that he has nearly always been approached from the specialist's point of view. Bacon, the jurist, we know, Bacon, the philosopher, Bacon, the essayist, and—most tedious of all—Bacon, the author of Shakespeare's plays. But of Bacon, the man, we have heard hardly anything since the publication of Spedding's *Letters and Life* in 1862. Miss Sturt's book therefore fills a gap. It is well that we should be reminded of Bacon's small beginnings, of the fact that he won success by sheer ability and without any skill in the courtier's art, and of that geniality and kindness in private life which was a redeeming feature in a character rather lacking in dramatic qualities and apt to be dismissed as "colourless" by modern readers. Miss Sturt writes with genuine enthusiasm for her subject, and if she does not quite succeed in making Bacon lovable, she infects us irresistibly with her own delight in his period. There is a brief description of the Strand in the sixteenth century—Bacon was born at York House on the site of the present Villiers Street and Buckingham Street—which I can heartily recommend to all lovers of old London.

Anthony à Wood, that irascible, back-biting, competent Oxford don of the seventeenth century, left behind him his *Life and Times*, which, being published by Andrew Clark in five bulky volumes, has received comparatively little attention in these hurried times. Mr. Llewelyn Powys has made a skilful abridgment, in which he seems to have brought out every point of historical importance, and anything which helps to throw light upon the strongly marked individuality of Anthony à Wood. (The "à," by the way, was his own invention.) He was a man with many dislikes, and not enough likes; but he was, in many respects, typical of his age. He loved neither Cavaliers nor Roundheads, nor was wholly happy under William and Mary. But he did enjoy grumbling and the circumstances of his time gave him plenty of occasion for that.

Mr. F. A. Forbes gives a more attractive and much more human portrait of Cardinal Merry del Val than that which has commonly been accepted in this country. That he was a keen sportsman, for instance, and essentially English in his outlook, is not widely known. But Mr. Forbes is as convincing as he is readable and his book will certainly be widely read.

CLENNELL WILKINSON

HISTORY

A HISTORY OF RUSSIA. By V. O. KLUCHEVSKY. Translated by C. J. HOGARTH. Volume V. Dent. 16s.

WAR AND PEACE IN EUROPE, AND OTHER ESSAYS. By E. L. WOODWARD. Constable. 14s.

THE MARITIME AND COLONIAL EXPANSION OF ENGLAND UNDER THE STUARTS. By A. D. INNES. Sampson Low, Marston & Co. 12s. 6d.

THE fifth and last volume of Kluchevsky's *History of Russia* in the English version contains four parts. (1) The first and longest part is a detailed study of Russian development under Catharine II, with a shorter account of the following reigns of Paul and Alexander I and a few pages on Nicholas I. Foreign relations are treated only shortly and generally. Kluchevsky condemns the Prussian alliance policy of Catharine, on the ground that it sacrificed the more valuable alliance of Austria and France to secure the less valuable friendship of Prussia, which moreover was sufficiently ensured by Prussia's own interests without requiring such sacrifice; and he condemns the partitions of Poland as contrary to real Russian interests: it was necessary to reincorporate the Russian population of Eastern Poland in Russia, but not to go shares with Austria and Prussia in the annexation of genuinely Polish territory, and an independent Poland set back within her true ethnographical boundaries would have been incomparably less dangerous to Russia than a Poland converted into two disaffected Germanic provinces. Three times during the nineteenth century Russia was called upon to fight the Poles, "whence it would seem that if one wishes to avoid hostility with a nation one should continue to conserve to that nation its State." Much fuller attention is given, however, to the very interesting and important legal and economic history of eighteenth-century Russia. Catharine proposed soon after her accession to confer upon her country the boon of a comprehensive new code of laws. She drew up a long series of instructions based mainly upon the political and legal theories of Montesquieu and Beccaria, for the Commission which was to carry out this work; three-quarters of these instructions were destroyed on the advice of courtiers, ecclesiastical dignitaries and others to whom they were submitted for criticism, the remaining one-quarter were published and form her famous *Nakaz*. The Commission, meeting in 1767, was instructed to draft a code in accordance with the existing laws, the *Nakaz*, and the requirements of the people, with the natural result that it achieved much discussion but no code, and soon disappeared:

For if the Commission had fashioned a *Ulozhenie* out of the legislation existent, the resultant Code would not have agreed with the Empress's *Nakaz*. And if the Commission had fashioned an *Ulozhenie* consonant with the *Nakaz*, the resultant Code would have conflicted with the legislation existent. And, probably, neither the one nor the other Code could have been made to meet "the people's needs and lackings."

More practical results followed from an important change in the system of provincial administration in 1775; but the results achieved were not the results intended or at any rate professed. Since the time of Peter the Great the control formerly exercised by representatives of various social classes over local government had been superseded more and more by the bureaucratic tyranny of a single class, the official aristocracy, exercised from the centre. The reform of 1775 abolished the twenty large government areas of Peter, units based on geographical and historical foundations, replaced them

with fifty smaller governments based simply on statistics of population and subdivided into vezdi on the same principle, separated general administration from finance and both (in accordance with the fashionable political philosophy) from justice, and set up a complicated new system of judicial institutions with class distinctions in the interest of the noble or *dvorianin* class. It was intended to revive the participation of local classes in local government, but actually it was only the uppermost class that benefited, and as this same class of course mainly filled the ranks of the bureaucracy the result was really to intensify the predominance of a single class while at the same time excessively complicating the machinery of government. All Catharine's measures of internal reform tended to strengthen the legal, political and economic predominance of the *dvorianin* class : a charter of 1785

defined formally, exactly the *dvorianstvo's* rights in general—recognised *dvoriané* as absolute owners of their immovable property and attached *krestiané*, gave them exemption from personal payment of taxes, allowed them to be judged only by their peers, exempted them from all punishment save by formal sentence of court, exempted them from corporal punishment in any case, and secured to them validity of a sentence of court only after Imperial confirmation.

It was in the eighteenth century, and especially under Catharine, that serfdom grew up in Russia and the serf came to be regarded almost without qualification as his lord's chattel. The most valuable part of this volume is the full and careful account of Russian serfdom from its origins, and of its effects upon the national economic and spiritual life. Among the innumerable curiosities of detail may be noted the flagellomaniac provisions of a domestic code compiled by one landowner for his serfs about 1764, prescribing the whip or the birch for all manner of offences, reckoning one stroke of the whip equal to 170 with the birch and prescribing that after 100 with the whip or 17,000 with the birch the victim might lie in hospital for a whole week, but the recipient of less than 10,000 birch strokes might only lie there half a week. It is noteworthy that while achieving unlimited right of disposal over the persons and the labour of their dependents the Russian landowners at the same time achieved freedom from all onerous social duties ; and meanwhile in Russia as in France theories of equality were expounded in the highest circles with approval and without any sense of a contrast between theory and practice, because practice and theory were never compared. In Kluchevsky's treatment of the reigns of Alexander and Nicholas the most interesting feature is his account of the comprehensive administrative and legal reform projected by Speranski, one of the most remarkable men in Russian history.

Next follows an Appendix which in the original Russian version forms the introductory chapters to the first volume ; these were not included in the first volume of the English translation. Kluchevsky here deals with the general conception and purpose, the methods and branches of historical study, emphasising as the three fundamental historical bases on which human social life is built the human personality, the human community, and a given nature of country. He then describes the geographical conditions of Russia and discusses the influence of geography upon the Russian people and their history : the influence of the forest which has always confronted the Russian (unlike the German) on the whole as an enemy, inspiring him with a sense of oppression and helplessness, a natural obstacle beyond his power to overcome ; the steppe which gave him his appreciation of space and distance but brought him also the constant and terrible human menace of the Asiatic nomad ; above all the river which was his faithful friend, flowing gently and flooding regularly, free from storms and sunken rocks, a familiar roadway in summer and winter, and an abundant source of food supply, the geographical creative factor in Russia as in Egypt.

Next there is a short *Survey of the Principal Phenomena of Russian History from the Time of Peter the Great*, reaching down to 1909 : a useful short sketch of foreign relations, territorial expansion, economic and constitutional development, the relation of which to the main work is not stated.

Finally this volume contains the Index to all the five volumes of the English version.

It must be said, I think, that the English version, whatever its relation to the original, is not always quite English enough. A certain colloquial roughness does no harm, even when it goes so far as telling us that the Department of the Procurator-General "was a Department peculiarly likely to cramp the official aristocracy's style," but the reader is too often clogged in his progress by an uncolloquial clumsiness and heaviness, and above all he is confronted with far too many fearsome apparitions in the form of untranslated Russian words :

And, lastly, the lowest stratum of institutions contained institutions of the *uezd*, as represented by the *uezdni sud*, the *gorodovoi magistrat*, and the *nizhnaia rasprava*, institutions wholly non-bureaucratic as regards their *personnels*—the president of the *nizhnaia rasprava* alone being nominated by the *gubernia's gubernskoe pravlenie* "from men of *chim*"...

This is an extreme but by no means an isolated example. It is difficult to believe that the danger of misleading the reader by the use of English words not exactly corresponding to the Russian can outweigh the disadvantage of leaving so many words untranslated altogether. Such danger could surely have been minimised by a judicious use of explanatory notes ; and alternatively, words which cannot be translated in the text might properly be explained in a glossary, which this volume lacks. Mr. Hogarth nevertheless has established a claim to the gratitude of all serious people by the way in which he has carried through his formidable task and made accessible to English readers this most authoritative of all histories of Russia, an invaluable mine of information upon everything that most matters in the historical development of that country.

Mr. E. L. Woodward writes with an easy elegance and a natural conversational fluency which make it a peculiarly restful pleasure to read his essays in these days of literary stridency and staccato. The essay which gives its name to this volume (*War and Peace in Europe*) is in five chapters, the last and longest dealing with the economic factors making for peace or war in Europe between 1815 and 1870. A second essay, entitled *Historical Material and Historical Certainty*, deals with the sources of modern history, the classification of historical material and the development of historical writing in the nineteenth century. I think the assertion "every science is an art, and every art a science" too simple and easy to be sound, but that is a long story. A third essay deals with French History and French Memoirs between 1815 and 1850.

Mr. A. D. Innes's *Maritime and Colonial Expansion of England under the Stuarts* is a clearly-written and useful account of the period during which our naval supremacy was founded and the First Empire took shape and developed its distinctive characteristics : a subject too often relegated to the background of our historical studies by the more obvious interest of the contemporary constitutional and religious conflict at home and the more outwardly eventful period of expansion and disruption which followed it in the Empire overseas. The book is illustrated with five maps and eight interesting portraits.

FRANCIS CLARKE

TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE

KAMET CONQUERED. By F. S. SMYTHE. Gollancz. 16s.

RALEGH'S LAST VOYAGE. By V. T. HARLOW. Argonaut Press. 30s.

A SUPERFICIAL JOURNEY THROUGH TOKYO AND PEKING. By PETER QUENNELL. Faber & Faber. 12s. 6d.

PEOPLE IN THE SOUTH. By ALAN PRYCE-JONES. Cobden-Sanderson. 8s. 6d.

THE PASSING OF THE BLACK KINGS. By HUGH MARSHALL HOLE, C.M.G. Philip Allan. 15s.

CONGORILLA. By MARTIN JOHNSON. Harrap. 12s. 6d.

THE LAND OF THE NEW ADVENTURE. By WILLIAM INGLIS MORSE. Quaritch. £2 15s.

REFLECTIONS IN JAMAICA. By MARY GAUNT. Benn. 8s. 6d.

THERE is something indescribably daunting about the Himalayas, something so coldly and magnificently aloof from our little world of Alps and Rocky Mountains and similar mole-heaps ; our carefully charted seas and forests ; our too accessible and almost featureless Poles. The Himalayas, it would appear, have been a long time agrowing ; they rose very slowly from the bosom of the earth and geologists say that they are bulging upwards still. At the present moment they cover a distance of rather more than 2,000 miles, mountains all the way ; and they include no fewer than thirty peaks of over 25,000 feet, not one of which has ever been climbed by man. Since the war there have been six separate attempts, lavishly financed and organised, to scale Everest or Kangchenjunga. All have failed. Indeed it might not be a bad idea to collect from Fleet Street and the United States all those journalists who are in the habit of writing as though every inch of the earth's surface were known, of prattling about the " conquest " of this, that or the other, and transport them in a body to the Northern borders of Nepal and show them the long ranks of those mighty peaks, contemptuously unapproachable, thrusting their pinnacles into the sky. Before looking they should be instructed to remove their hats.

Yet the first of the giants—Kamet—has fallen. Mr. Smythe tells the full story of the historic climb. The last slope was desperately difficult ; a slip meant death ; and after the slope there was a sharp ridge to be crossed before these exhausted men pushing their head porter in front of them—a well-merited compliment—lay gasping for breath on the summit itself. Mr. Holdsworth lit a pipe. Mr. Smythe, leader and historian of the expedition, doubts whether he can really have enjoyed it at 25,447 feet ; but at any rate it was a notable offering to the Goddess Nicotine—one of those unexpected little gestures likely to live in travel history when more important facts are forgotten.

This was the final burst at the winning post. Before it lay months of careful preparation, with only an occasional shooting expedition to relieve the monotony, followed by a methodical approach towards the objective until the besiegers were ready for the assault. It was a victory for scientific mountaineering : that is the important fact. These climbers carried no oxygen apparatus, but they had made a close study of the process of acclimatisation, in the light of previous experience, and a chapter contributed by Dr. Raymond Greene on " The Medical Aspects of High

Climbing" should prove of real value. Sir Francis Younghusband, in his foreword, seeking for an explanation of the persistence with which modern man returns again and again to the attack upon these mountain tops, argues that the secret must lie in "the power the mountain has to force the best out of man." And "man likes to be at his best." But a simpler explanation is that mountaineering, in these latter days, has become a science, or a fine art, and has thus acquired a fascination for its devotees which would have been utterly inexplicable to any of our ancestors, great adventurers though they were.

Mr. Smythe has a clean vigorous style and manages his story well. Almost everyone can write nowadays (and does), though few have anything much to say. But it is the great advantage of this universal fluency that even men of action are able to give a vivid, stimulating account of their deeds.

To the great Sir Walter Raleigh mountain climbing for its own sake would have seemed sheer midsummer madness. Yet Mr. Smythe's objective was more substantial than El Dorado. Even Raleigh had dropped that impossible dream long before he set out on his last voyage which is the subject of Mr. Harlow's book. Mr. Harlow has brought together for the first time all the English data relating to this memorable and fatal journey, together with much new evidence drawn from Spanish sources. All this he prints in the second part of his book. The first part consists of his own interpretation of the facts, with a careful examination of the conflicting motives of Raleigh and King James. He puts forward a surprisingly favourable view of the latter's conduct, while not excusing his sacrifice of a great Englishman to the exigencies of his statecraft. In this volume the Argonaut Press have given us an important contribution to history and a beautiful book in itself.

Mr. Peter Quennell and Mr. Alan Pryce-Jones are extraordinarily interesting travellers, with their own ways of looking at things. The circumstances of Mr. Quennell's visit to the Far East were, to begin with, unusual. He became professor of English literature in a newly-founded Japanese University. Now it is doubtful whether a professor of English in an Oriental country ever sees that country at its best. If fate had taken Mr. Quennell to Cairo or Bombay it is certain that his pupils would have bombarded him with the same idiotic, exasperating questions. He was disappointed in the Japanese, finding them, on the whole, rather slow in the uptake, with none of that mental agility he had been led to expect. There were no brilliant students in whom he could take a personal interest, no outstanding individualities; "it is only in the mass that the Japanese are estimable." Precisely the same impression would be gathered (to my personal knowledge) in the schools of Cairo, and also, I fancy, in Bombay. The Oriental student is the same everywhere. He asks questions, but he cannot answer them, having no notion of the finer shades of meaning in the use of words. "Why do you admire Galsworthy?" Mr. Quennell would ask. "John Galsworthy is champion of the poor," would be the reply. "What is it that you admire in Hardy's novels?"—"Hardy is prophet of the lower classes." In fact they do not know; they simply repeat some jargon learnt from the west. They do not even understand the drift of the question, for to translate literature correctly into Japanese is to them to understand it in its whole content. So the young professor strove in vain—and describes it all very wisely and wittily. Then he went to China and made the acquaintance of the subtlest people in the East, a people with some idea of the meaning of criticism, a civilisation he could whole-heartedly admire. Here he found relief, as many Englishmen have before him. But he states the usual English preference more convincingly than I have ever seen it done. This is a book full of wisdom, neatly and gracefully expressed.

Mr. Pryce-Jones's subject is South America ; and that for the obviously sufficient reason that, " apart from Russia, it is the only part of the world which can be looked at with any emotion other than the fascinated repulsion with which we admire the decay of a cheese." In fact he prefers Canadian cheddar to Stilton. Yet I must confess that I found nothing particularly fresh, or young, or rich in promise for the future, about the only corner of South America I happen to have seen. However, it is good to approach a new country in a spirit of optimism, and Mr. Pryce-Jones has produced a most stimulating and entertaining book. He adopts a curious method of his own, recounting none of his personal experiences, and telling of his impressions through the mouths of imaginary characters. The method is not an easy one, but he uses it with notable skill.

Here are two books about Africa. Col. Hole, a former Civil Commissioner of Bulawayo, tells the story of three of the last great native potentates—King Khama, of the Bamangwato, reformer and temperance advocate ; Lobengula of the Matabele, whose downfall is a matter of recent history ; and Lewanika, ruler of the Barotse Kingdom, who was probably the most capable of the three. It is the first time I have come across a detailed narrative of this stormy period in African history, written entirely from the black man's point of view, without religious or political prejudice, and I have found it absorbingly interesting. Mr. Martin Johnson, a friend and former colleague of the late Dr. Akerley, has been touring " unknown Africa " with a fleet of motor cars, for the purpose of putting pygmies and gorillas on the films. He returned to New York with several miles of photographs, two or three half-grown gorillas, and the manuscript of this book, which is just the usual lively American account of such expeditions. The most important pronouncement it contains is Mr. Johnson's considered opinion that the Congo gorillas are now so numerous that there is no serious danger of their extermination.

The Land of the New Adventure is an elaborate and beautifully illustrated description of Nova Scotia in the eighteenth century. *Reflections in Jamaica* is a pleasant gossip volume which should appeal to the ever increasing army of visitors who sail annually to the West Indies in search of sunshine.

CLENNELL WILKINSON